

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Sandy Oaks Municipal Court, Bexar County Judiciary

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, the Municipal Court of the City of Sandy Oaks, Bexar County, Texas will implement the following protective measures:

General

1. The Judge will comply with the Emergency Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Texas and Court of Criminal Appeals, including conducting in-person proceedings according to the guidance issued by the Office of Court Administration regarding social distancing, maximum group size, and other restrictions and precautions.
2. The Judge will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. The presiding judge of the municipal court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and mayor and will adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. The Judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than July 13, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. The Judge and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their jobs remotely will telework when possible.
2. The Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: the Judge, Prosecutor, and court staff will have their temperatures checked before entering the courtroom and will report directly to the Mayor if they believe they have been exposed to COVID-19 or are symptomatic.
3. The Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 99.6°F, or with new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, or having known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 will not be permitted to enter the building and should seek medical advice.
4. The Judge and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
5. Protective Measures: Staff are to be provided with hand sanitizer, sanitizing spray for workstations, gloves, and masks. Hand sanitizer is to be provided in the lobby for the public. The defendants are only allowed into City Hall one at a time. Staff working at their desks will be separated from the public by plexi-glass partitions. Options are available to handle cases by phone, email, regular mail, videoconference, and a 24-hour drop box and these are being encouraged to reduce any in-person appearances. Notices for these options have been posted on the Court's website, the City's Facebook page, and are posted outside of all court buildings. Before any signature is required, the defendant will be required to use hand sanitizer. Any pen used by the public will be cleaned and sanitized between each user.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Individuals will be encouraged to resolve their citations without having to appear in person and may choose to resolve their cases by phone, email, online payments, the 24-hour drop box, regular mail, or videoconference. Individuals who appear in person will be screened prior to entry. Individuals will then sign into court with their name and phone number. After signing in, the defendant will wait in his/her vehicle. Defendants will be called/texted to enter the courtroom, as allowed by social distancing practices. Upon entering the courtroom, defendants will be required to use hand sanitizer and wear a face mask. Only the individual with the citation will be allowed inside the court building and inside the courtroom. The exceptions will be for parents/guardians of a juvenile or minor child, as well as attorneys. Limits will be placed on the total number of individuals allowed in the courtroom at one time.

Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy, are considered to be vulnerable populations.
2. The Judge will include information on orders setting hearings, dockets notices, and in other communications notifying individuals who are in vulnerable populations of the ability to contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations. A notice with this information will be posted on the court's websites and in conspicuous locations around the court building (a copy of which is attached).
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by a reset, phone conference or videoconference.

Social Distancing

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the court building will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet.
2. Each restroom has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity has been posted on each restroom door.
3. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

6. In the courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, Judge's bench, clerks, and bailiff seating have been arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrance to the building, outside of the courtroom, and outside of the bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, and on the judge's benches.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building (a copy of which is attached).

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the Bailiff or designated staff, if required, will ask the individuals if they have any of the following symptoms: fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion; runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea; or if they have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Individuals who indicate yes to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the court building.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the City Marshal or Deputy or Bailiff or designated staff, will use a touch-less infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°F will be refused admittance to the court building.
3. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including masks, face shields, gloves, and hand sanitizer.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court building for over 1 hour will be provided surgical masks and required to wear them while in the court building if the supply is available.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 3 hours.
 2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
 3. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom and common areas before the entry of new individuals.
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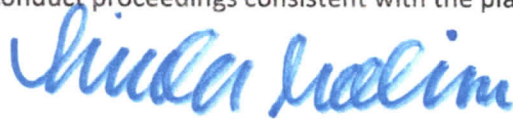
4. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
5. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment, and they will continue to be updated.

Other

The court will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of this Plan and will adjust as needed, with continued collaboration with the Bexar County Health Authority and the Mayor.

In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the Judge and staff of the court with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 6/22/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court
City of Sandy Oaks

APPROVED:

Micki L Ball

Micki Ball
Mayor
City of Sandy Oaks

6-26-2020

Date

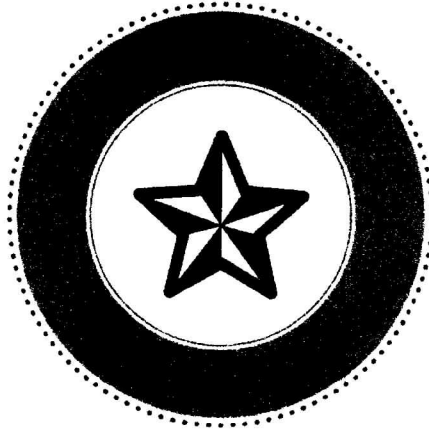
APPROVED:

Dr. C. Junda Woo

Dr. C. Junda Woo
Appointed Health Authority
Bexar County

June 28, 2020

Date



COVID-19 SANDY OAKS MUNICIPAL COURT, BEXAR COUNTY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS NOTICE

Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable populations and at higher risk of developing complications from contracting COVID-19.

The Court of Sandy Oaks recognizes the need for accommodations for individuals who are in this population and have a scheduled court appearance. Therefore, if you are an individual described by the CDC as part of vulnerable population, the Court will accommodate an in-person court setting by allowing the opportunity to appear for hearings remotely or, in the alternative, provide a continuance upon notice and good cause to the court in advance of the scheduled hearing date.

Please contact the Court at 210-607-0645.

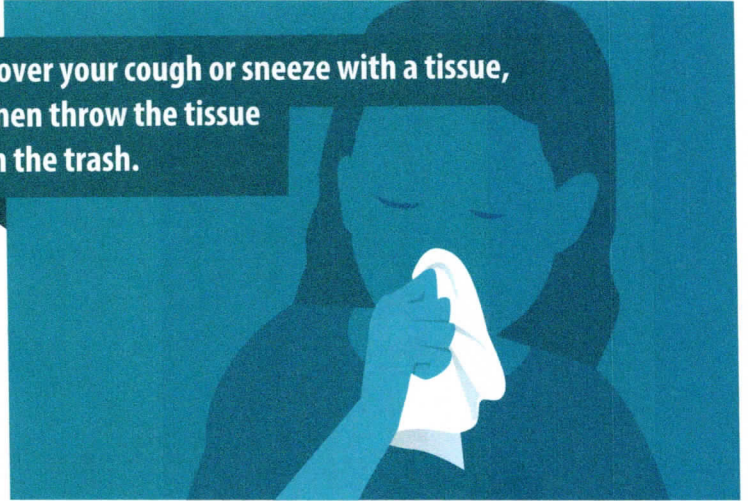
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

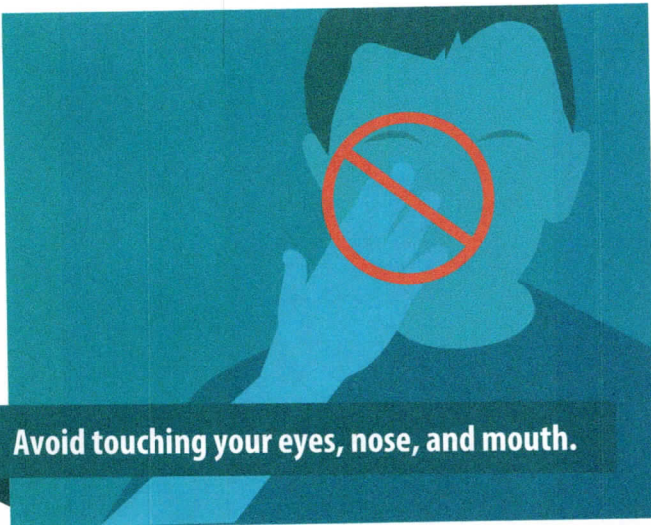
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus

