

# COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Sherman Municipal Court, Grayson County, Texas

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 Sherman Municipal Court, Grayson County Texas will implement the following protective measures:

## General

1. All judges 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. All judges 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, mayor and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the City of Sherman.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020

## Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: All staff will self-monitor and will immediately report any symptoms or exposure to her or her supervisor.
2. 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.
3. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings), practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Protective Measures: Clerks/Judges/Bailiffs will adhere to Social Distancing practices. No sharing of supplies or Work Stations. Hand Sanitizer, Disinfecting Spray and Wipes are readily available.

## Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Docket times have been extended by earlier start times, spacing defendants report times, and attempting to identify all vulnerable populations by age and inquiring of health conditions when phone contact is attempted before court date and time. Each defendant will be requested to have some type of face covering when reporting to court. Court staff will provide face coverings if they report without covering.

### 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. Each 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 courts' 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: As explained in Scheduling above.

### Social Distancing

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the court room will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet.

#### *Gallery*

2. 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.
3. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

#### *Well*

4. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and clerk, court reporter, and bailiff seating have been arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space. Plexiglas shields have been installed on the bench, lectern and entrance table.

### Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrance of the Court Room
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted on each exterior door leading into the Court Building and at the entrance of the Court Room.

### Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, court security staff will ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish; have a cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty

breathing; or 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 room and given an alternate court date in 30 days.

2. When individuals attempt to enter the court room, court security staff will use an infrared thermostat to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0 F will be refused admittance to the court room and given an alternative court date of at least 30 days in the future. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including masks and gloves.

### **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.

### **Cleaning**

1. Court room cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court room so that common spaces are cleaned 24 hours before each court session.
2. Court room cleaning staff will sanitize the courtroom and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. Court room cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court room cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

### **Other**

I have attempted to confer with all judges of the court with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Operating Plan. 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 of The Sherman Municipal Court covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/22/2020



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Scott Smith, Presiding Judge of Municipal Court