

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Stafford Municipal Court City 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 courts of **Stafford Municipal Court** 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 and mayor and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 2, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judges and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Court personnel will continue to be temperature checked upon arrival to the building. All persons entering the court building to handle court business will be temperature checked. There are two entrances to the court lobby which allows for monitored and controlled entry.
3. 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. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: Court personnel will be provided with a face covering if they do not already have one. Disposable gloves are available to personnel. Hand sanitizer is also available at each window station, inside the courtroom, at the metal detector screening station, and on the outside of the clerk windows for customers. After each setting, the courtroom will be re-sanitized with Lysol and Clorox wipes where applicable. The front counter and entrance door handles will also be sanitized.

Scheduling

The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:

1. Defendants will be given a specific time to appear for court. Times will be staggered to allow no more than 18 people per hour to appear. This will allow sufficient time to process out the defendants from one time slot before the next time slot defendants appear.

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 being eligible for a continuance to a later date or by appointment only.

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.

Well

6. 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.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building and inside of the courtroom.
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 in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, there will be a city employee there to temperature check the person and he/she 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 building.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, a city employee will use an 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. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court building will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and have their temperature taken prior to transport. Inmates with symptoms or a temperature equal to or above 99.6°F will not be transported to the court building.
4. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including mask 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.
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 courtroom between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
2. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

Floor markings are in place for the lobby line for the clerk windows that align with social distancing guidelines. Prosecution will utilize the processing room attached to the courtroom and be on one side of the installed glass with the defendant on the other. This will allow for protective measures beneficial to both parties and while allowing a private setting for negotiations. Barriers will be in place on the judge's bench and the courtroom clerk's desk as well for protective measures beneficial to all parties involved in the communication. Seating in the gallery will be marked and defendants directed to sit where marked to comply with social distancing guidelines.,

I have attempted to confer with all judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and Choose an item., documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/11/2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra Sinclair", written over a horizontal line.

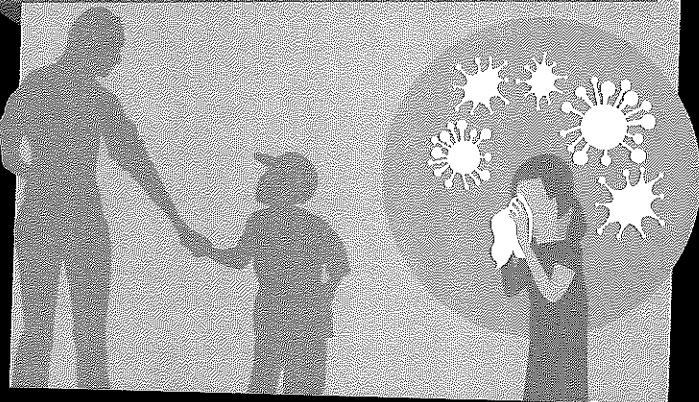
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

Debra Sinclair

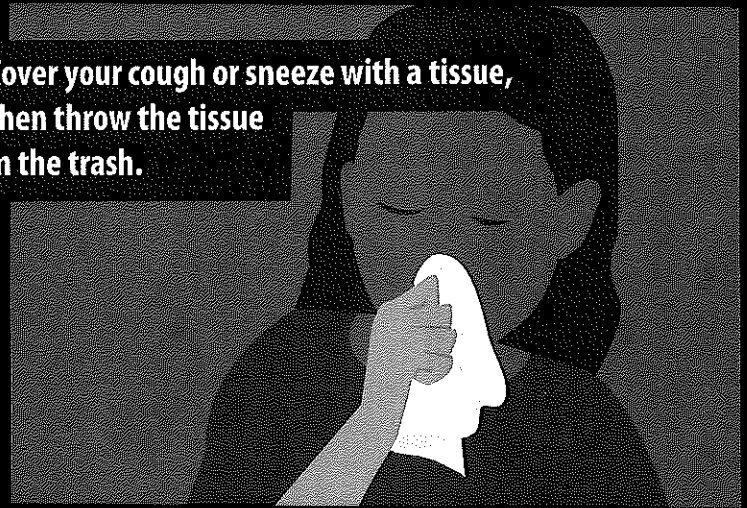
Stop the Spread of Germs

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

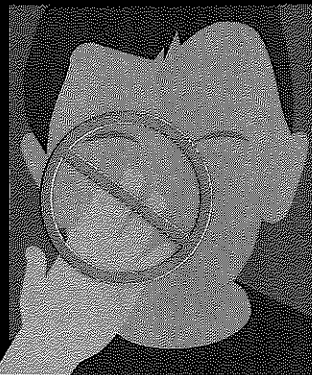
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



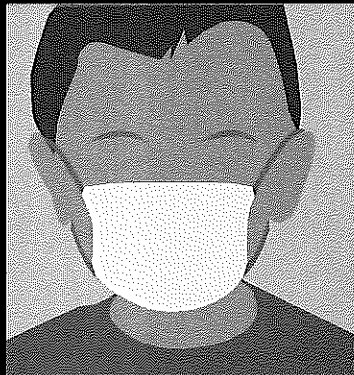
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



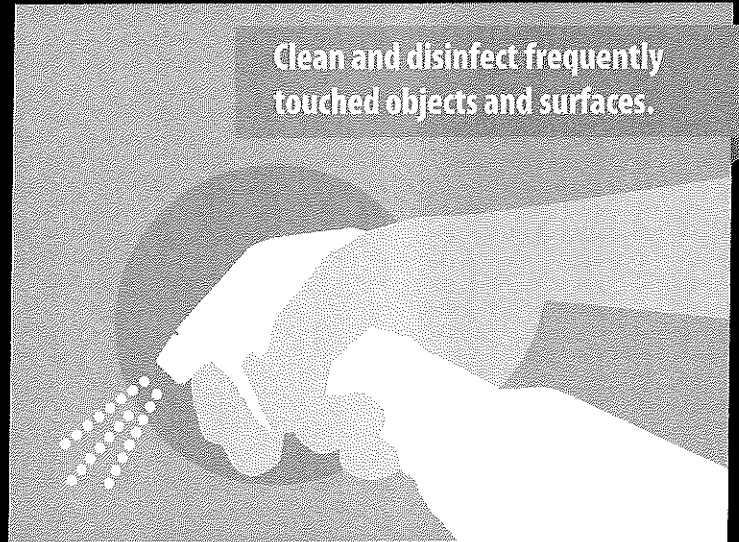
Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



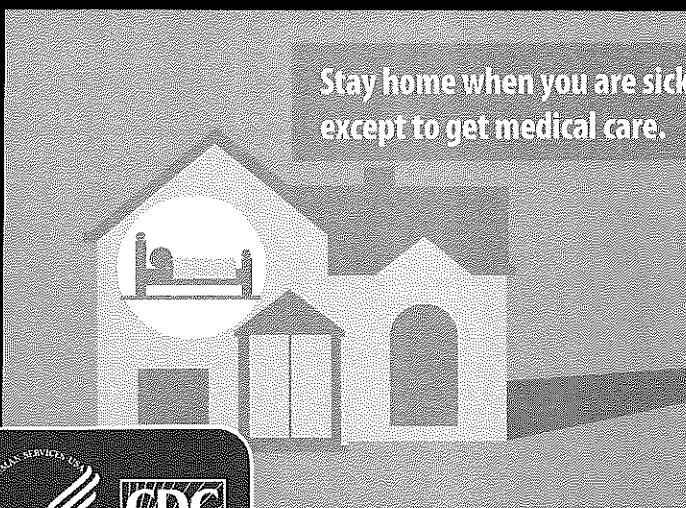
When in public, wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth.



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.

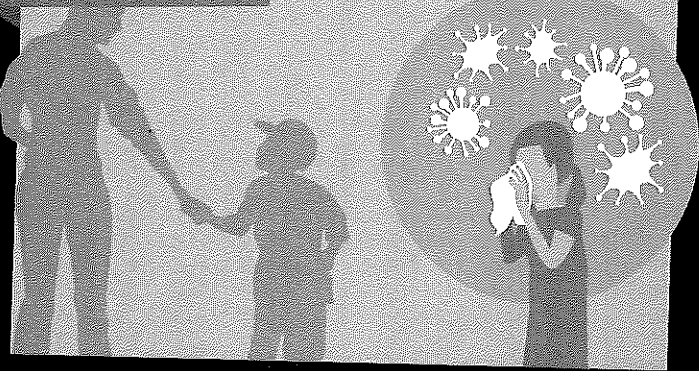


cdc.gov/coronavirus

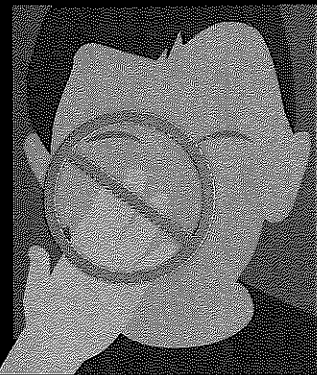
Detenga la propagación de gérmenes

Ayude a prevenir la transmisión de enfermedades respiratorias como el COVID-19

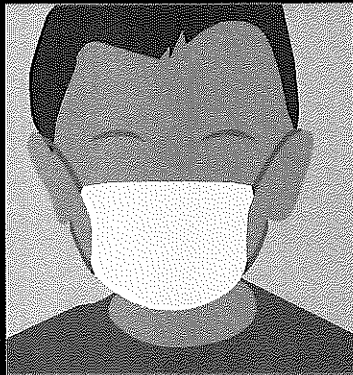
Evite el contacto cercano con personas que están enfermas.



Cúbrase con un pañuelo desechable al toser o estornudar y luego bótelos en la basura.



Evite tocarse los ojos, la nariz o la boca.



Cuando esté en un lugar público, use una cubierta de tela para la cara sobre su nariz y boca.

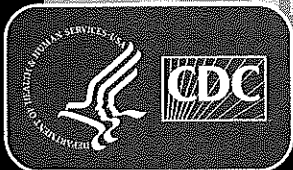
Limpie y desinfecte los objetos y superficies de contacto frecuente.



Quédese en casa cuando esté enfermo, excepto para recibir atención médica.



Lávese las manos frecuentemente con agua y jabón por al menos 20 segundos.



cdc.gov/coronavirus