



CITY OF TERRELL MUNICIPAL COURT

201 E. Nash St.
Terrell, TX 75160
972-551-6600

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Terrell Municipal Court

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 **City of Terrell** 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 proceeding remotely
3. The presiding judge of the municipal court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and mayor and adjust this operation plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceeding no sooner than June 1, 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. Judges and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: All staff will self-monitor and will immediately report any symptoms or exposure to his or her supervisor.
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 appropriated hygiene recommendations all times.
5. Protective Measures: Frequent handwashing is required, and hand sanitizer is strategically located throughout the workplace.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: The volume in a municipal court is substantially higher than other types of courts in Texas. That said, we will conduct all scheduled dockets in a manner consistent with social distancing guidelines. We will utilize additional spaces to

maintain occupancy under 10 for any courtroom or lobby area. Our court docket will consist of Plea Hearings and Show Cause Hearings at the maximum of two days a week and Bench Trials at the maximum of twice a month.

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 and considered to be vulnerable populations.
2. Each judge will include information on orders setting hearing, dockets notices, and in other communications notifying individuals who are 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 in conspicuous locations around the court building.
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by resetting their hearing until after the pandemic has subsided or conducting their hearing via Zoom.

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. Each restroom can accommodate one person at a time.
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 and spaced accordingly

Well

6. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench 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 courtroom.
2. Tissues have been placed in the courtroom.
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, 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 answer yes to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the court building and receive accommodations, such as resetting their proceedings.

2. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protection equipment, including facial coverings and gloves.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every six hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with the coronavirus.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

Staff will adhere to all social distancing requirements and will be spread out to meet all guidelines. Red tape has been placed every six feet in our lobby to maintain public social distancing, and seating will be removed from the courtroom waiting areas to provide separation. Additionally, seating in the courtroom will be assigned to meet social distancing guidelines.

During our public closure, our customer service window in the court lobby will be closed and business will be conducted through the drive thru window when possible. This will greatly reduce exposure. Additionally, Bailiffs will limit the number of individuals entering the building in accordance with federal, state, and local guidelines.


I have consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the court conducts proceedings consistent with the plan.

DATE: 05-26-2020



Presiding Judge: Mike Smith

DATE: 05-26-2020



Mayor: Rick Carmona

DATE: 05-27-2020



Local Health Authority /
Emergency Management Coordinator