

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Wallis 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 **Wallis 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 Wallis Municipal Court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and mayor and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the county.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than July 15, 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: daily self-monitoring and reporting.
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: encouragement of face masks, frequent hand washing/sanitizing.

Scheduling

1. Options available to handle cases and reduce occupancy in the court building: Utilizing Zoom, phone, email, mail, and a 24 hour drop box are being utilized to reduce any in-person dealings with court cases. Each hearing will consist of no more than ten defendants. Defendants will check in from their vehicles upon arrival via text messaging. Defendants will not be allowed to bring other guests with them to a hearing. Juvenile defendants shall only be accompanied by one parent/guardian and no other guests including siblings.

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. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by remote hearings where possible, individual hearings when necessary.

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.

Gallery

2. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom is 4. 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.

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.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of outside of the courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. 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.
3. Pens used for signatures are sanitized regularly.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will be requested 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 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 regularly.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.

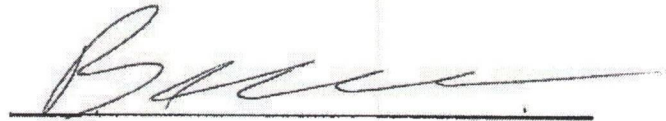
- 3. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
- ✓ 4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

Remote hearings via ZOOM teleconferencing or telephone will be encouraged for all persons having business before the court.

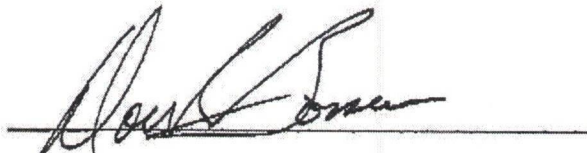
I have attempted to confer with all judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of courts with courtrooms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

Date: 6/3/20



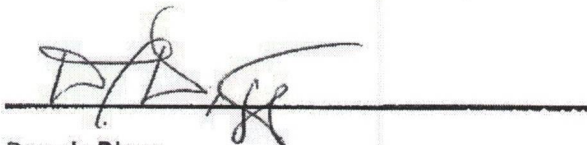
Bernice Burger
Presiding Judge of Wallis Municipal Court

Date: 5/29/2020



Dr. Don Bosse
Public Health Authority, Austin County

Date: 3 June 2020



Dennis Diggs
Mayor, City of Wallis

NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The following notice shall be posted on the Court's website, at the entrance to the Court and at the Court Clerk's window, and in all orders setting hearings, docket notices, and other communications

NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The following are considered to be a member of Vulnerable Populations:

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.

Any person who is in a Vulnerable Population category may contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations, which will include the ability to participate in electronic or telephonic proceedings. If you do not have the technology to appear electronically or by telephone, the court will make accommodations for you at the court that will include the ability to so participate using equipment that will be sanitized between users. If you appear in person at the court, you will be required to wear a protective mask or one will be provided to you if you do not have one.