

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Waxahachie Municipal Court, Ellis County

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 Waxahachie Municipal Court will implement the following protective measures for non-essential in-person court proceedings:

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 October 1, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judges and court staff have resumed working in the court office.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: All court staff will be required to wear protective face coverings while in the court room. All court staff will wear protective face coverings while in public areas of the building on days the court is in session, as well as all other days while required by Executive Order of the Governor or City/County Leaders. Court staff will meet with members of the public through the protective and secure customer service window. Court staff is encouraged to wear a face covering while working behind the protective customer service window or other non-public, secured areas of the court when social distancing between staff members cannot be maintained.
3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100°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 while in the court room, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
5. Protective Measures: The City Marshal will ensure social distancing is maintained in the court room. Court staff working at the Court's customer service window will ensure social distancing is maintained in that area.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: No in-person bench trials, or in-person pretrial appearances, will occur before October 1, 2020. No jury trials will occur before October 1, 2020. The number of persons on a docket will be

monitored to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Any defendant will have the opportunity to appear in court remotely via Zoom.

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. Information on orders setting hearings, dockets notices, and in other communications will be included to notify individuals who are in vulnerable populations of the ability to contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations.
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by allowing them to appear in Court remotely 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. No more than two individuals not from the same household will be permitted in an elevator. If more than one individual from the same household is in an elevator, no other individuals will be permitted in the elevator.
3. Each restroom has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing. The public restrooms are single occupancy restrooms by design.

Gallery

4. The City Marshall will control access to the court room and will assign seats so that social distancing is maintained. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
5. The gallery of the courtroom will be marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating will be limited to every other row.

Well

6. The counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerk seating, and bailiff seating in the court room have been arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.

Hygiene

1. The City of Waxahachie regularly places hand sanitizer dispensers at the entrances to the building and various areas in the building, and hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed outside of the court room on court days.
2. Tissues will be placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, and on the judge's bench.
3. Flyers regarding covid-19 and proper hygiene have been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court room, the City Marshall 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 directed to exit the building immediately.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the court room, the City Marshall will use an infrared thermometer, when received, to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°F will be refused admittance to the court room.
3. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court room will be provided personal protective equipment, including a mask and gloves.

Face Coverings

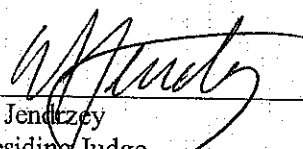
1. All individuals entering the court room will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.
3. Accommodations will be made for any person younger than 10 years of age, or any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering.

Cleaning

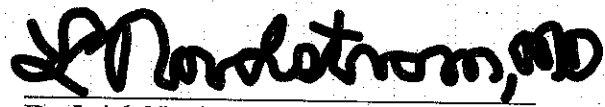
1. City Hall cleaning staff will clean the courtroom before and after each docket.

In developing this plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will act in good faith to ensure the foregoing Operating Plan is followed by the Marshal and court staff of the Waxahachie Municipal Court.

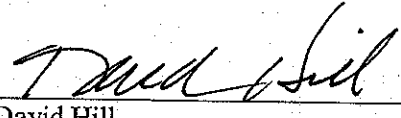
Date: 9/11/20


 Ed Jendzey
 Presiding Judge
 Waxahachie Municipal Court

Date: 9/4/20


 Dr. Leigh Nordstrom
 Local Health Authority for Ellis County

Date: 9-8-20


 David Hill
 Mayor
 City of Waxahachie