

# COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Webster 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 City of Webster 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 when necessary.
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: see #3 below
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 practice social distancing of at least 6 feet and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
5. Protective Measures: Sanitizer will be available at various stations throughout the building and signage on social distancing and how to prevent the spread of germs will be posted throughout the building. A no-contact thermometer will be used by the Court Bailiff at the court entrance.

## Scheduling

1. The following procedures are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:  
We are holding more dockets with fewer defendants.  
Settings are scheduled for every thirty minutes and posted notices limit entry into the building only within five minutes of scheduled time slot.  
Only one person at a time is allowed at the court window.

## **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 court's website 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 phone hearings or Tyler Virtual Court or will be rescheduled to a later date when in-person appearance is safe. We use online requests and payments, email and fax requests, and we have a drop box in the parking lot. We take payments and requests by mail.

## **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 door has been a posted sign requiring social distancing of 6 feet and a maximum capacity of 2 persons.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snackrooms, have been closed to the public.
5. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom will be determined and marked. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff and bailiffs.
6. The gallery of the courtroom will be marked to identify appropriate 6 foot social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.
7. 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 person. Court personnel are behind plexiglass shields.

## Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of the courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
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, one of the bailiffs 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 and cases reset.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, one of the bailiffs will use a no-contact 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 masks and will conduct court behind plexiglass shields. Clerks at the court windows are behind bullet-proof glass.

## Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will be encouraged to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them.
3. No Individuals will be required to be inside the court building for over 1 hour.

## Cleaning

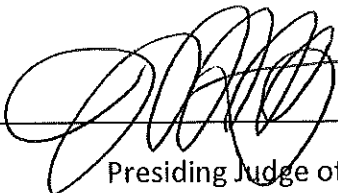
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building at least every twenty-four hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. Court building cleaning staff 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.

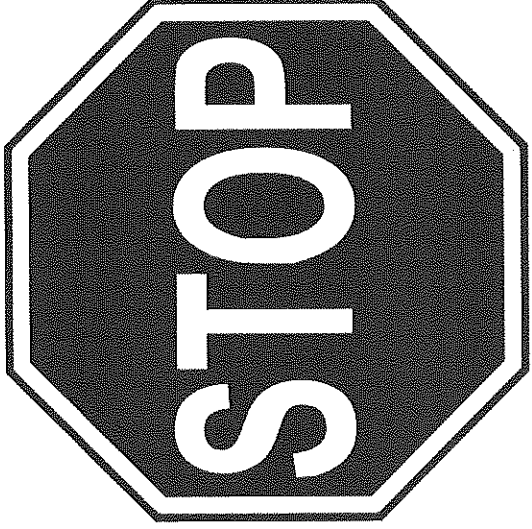
**Other**

We will continue to provide many options for defendants who do not want to appear in person such as online requests for DSC, Deferreds, Payment plans, Requests for trials, Requests to transfer cash bonds. We use email and faxes for other requests and have a drop box in the parking lot for payments or written correspondence.

I have attempted to confer with all judges using the courtroom in the building regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges using the courtroom in the building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/19/2020

  
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Presiding Judge of Municipal Court



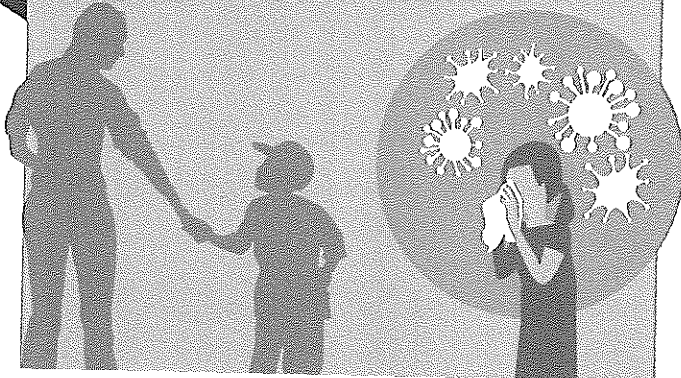
**Please use hand  
sanitizer and wait at  
table until called**

**COVID-19**  
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

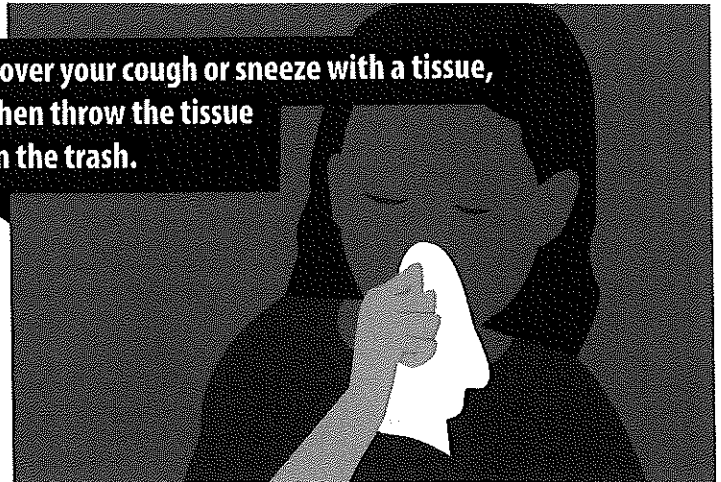
# STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

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

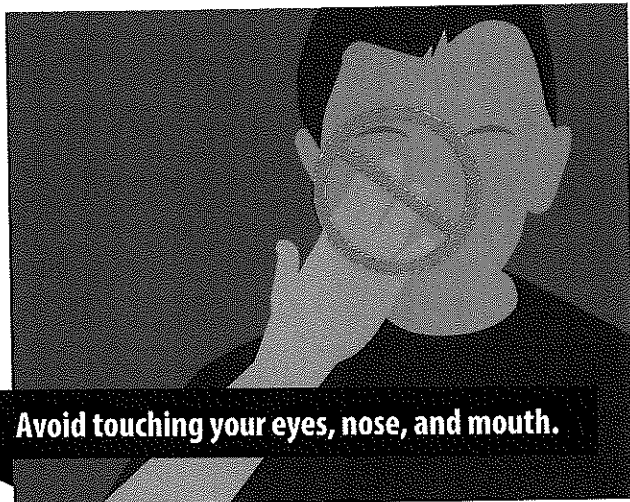
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



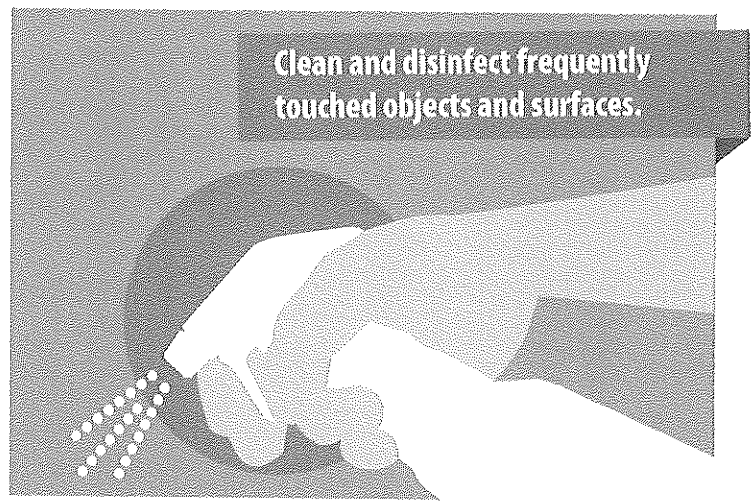
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



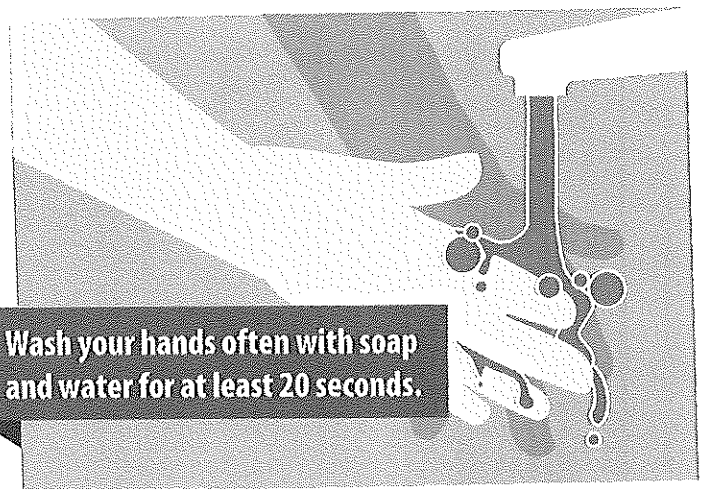
Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



TEXAS  
Health and Human  
Services

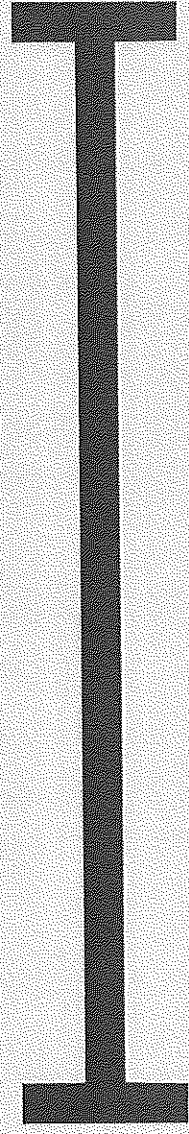
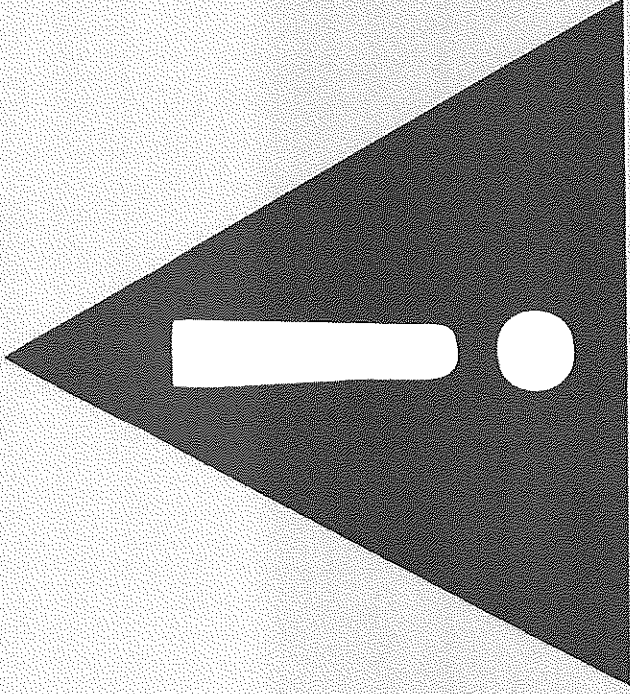
Texas Department of State  
Health Services

For more information: [dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus](https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus)

# NOTICE:

If you need to appear in court during this COVID-19 pandemic and are considered to be an individual in a vulnerable population, please notify the court so that we may arrange accommodations.

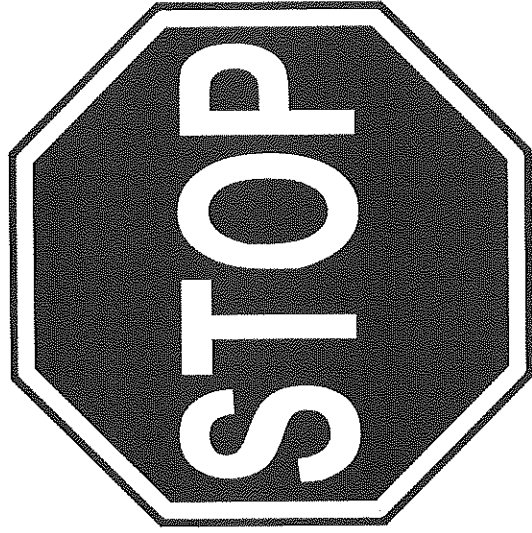
# MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING



6 FEET







**DUE TO 6-FOOT  
SOCIAL DISTANCING  
REQUIREMENTS, THE  
MAXIMUM CAPACITY**

**OF BATHROOM IS 2 PERSONS.**

**PLEASE WAIT IN LOBBY UNTIL  
SPACE IS AVAILABLE.**