

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Wharton 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 **The City of Wharton** will implement the following protective measures:

General

1. The presiding judge of the municipal court judge 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. The presiding judge of the municipal court 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. The presiding judge of the municipal court will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. The presiding judge of the municipal court and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. The presiding judge of the municipal court and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Daily Temperature Checks
3. The presiding judge of the municipal court 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. The presiding judge of the municipal court and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: No more than 10 persons permitted in the court at one time. Social distancing must be maintained and when possible a clear physical barrier between staff and those in court.

Scheduling

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

Judges hours will be provided to the public each day in order to accommodate all wishing to plea with the judge. Pre-trial, trials, and other hearings will be scheduled and conducted in a manner that only allows for ten persons inside of the courtroom at a time.

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. The presiding judge of the municipal court 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 allowing a scheduled time for only that individual to enter the courtroom.

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. The restroom has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity has been posted on the restroom door.

Gallery

3. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
4. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

5. 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 entrance to the court complex and outside of the courtroom.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' bench, and in the hallway.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations of the court building.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the bailiff 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, bailiff 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. The bailiff 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.

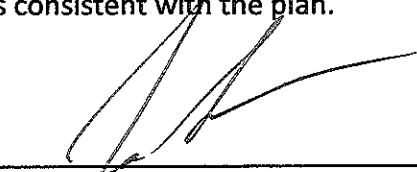
Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 2 hours.
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.

As the only judge of the Wharton Municipal Court I have constructed and approved 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 judge of the court in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conducts proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/6/2020



Jared L. Cullar

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court



City of Wharton

120 E. Caney Street • Wharton, Texas 77488
Phone (979) 532-2491 • Fax (979) 532-0181

May 5, 2020

Judge Jared Cullar
Wharton Municipal Court
1407 North Richmond Road Suite 200
Wharton, Texas 77488

Re: COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Wharton Municipal Court City Judiciary

Dear Judge Cullar:

I have reviewed and approve the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Wharton Municipal Court City Judiciary.

Please contact me at City Hall (979) 532-2491 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

CITY OF WHARTON

By:

Tim Barker
Mayor

TB:bj

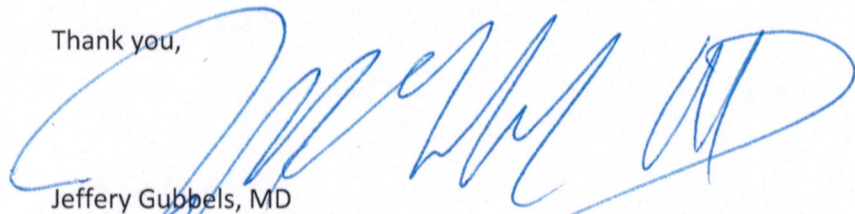
cc: Paula Favors, City Secretary

Jeffery L. Gubbels MD
Health Officer, City of Wharton

May 6, 2020

After reviewing the proposed plan for reopening Municipal Court, I support reopening operations within the parameters described in the document shared with me by the City of Wharton.

Thank you,



Jeffery Gubbels, MD
Health Officer, City of Wharton
Wharton County Health Authority