

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Whitewright Municipal Court, Grayson County 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 Whitewright 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 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 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. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: daily temperature will be taken of all court personnel entering the court building.
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: court staff working the service window are separated from the public by shatter resistant window. Court staff will be provided with hand sanitizers, sanitizing wipes for all workstations, gloves, and face masks. Hand

sanitizer and masks will be provided in the lobby for customer use. Signs and/ or floor stickers will be placed to encourage social distancing while waiting at service window. Options available to handle cases by phone, email, mail, online payment, and a 24 hour drop box will be encouraged to reduce any in-person dealing with court cases. Notices for these options will be posted on the court's website, mailed, emailed, and mentioned on the courts phone answering system. Signatures on court documents will be required only if deemed necessary, and when required give away pens will be provided to keep contact to a minimum.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: all defendants will be encouraged to call, email, or mail any paperwork and payments in to avoid having in-person contact.
 - a. Window walk-in
 - I. Lobby will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
 - II. Only 1 (one) person will be allowed in the lobby due the size of the lobby
 - III. If another person was to need to come into the lobby while the first person is already there; the 6 (six) foot spacing will come into play.
 - IV. Masks and hand sanitizer will be given to each defendant while in the lobby.
 - b. Hearings before the Judge
 - I. Utilizing the Zoom application for all hearings requested by a defendant will take place on Thursday of every week at 5 p.m.
 - II. In-person hearings will be held on the 4th (fourth) Thursday of every month beginning at 4 p.m,
 - III. Each hearing will consist of no more than 10 (ten) people including the judge, prosecutor, court clerk, bailiff, and the Officer who issued the violation.
 - IV. In between each hearing cleaning and sanitizing will be ordered.
 - V. Defendants will not be allowed to bring other guests with them unless that person is a witness to the case. The court must have prior acknowledgment of this witness to adjust for the 10-person limit.

- VI. Juvenile defendants that are required to make an appearance in front of the judge shall be accompanied by 1 (one) parent/guardian, and no other guests including siblings.
- VII. Accommodations will be made to comply with the Open Courts Provision but at no time will the Courtroom exceed 25% of normal Courtroom capacity.

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 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 scheduling a phone conference or accommodated by video remote (Zoom) hearings where possible, individual hearing 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 (six) feet.
2. Each restroom has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity has been posted on each restroom door.
3. Public common areas, including breakrooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the 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.

Well

6. 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 (six) feet between each space.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at door entrances to court offices and lobby, inside the courtroom, and inside of bathrooms.
2. Sanitizing wipes available for use with the court offices, courtroom, bathrooms, and lobby. Also, to clean devices such as credit card readers, phones, fax machines, and copiers.
3. Tissues have been placed at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallway.
4. 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, 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. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including masks and surgical 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

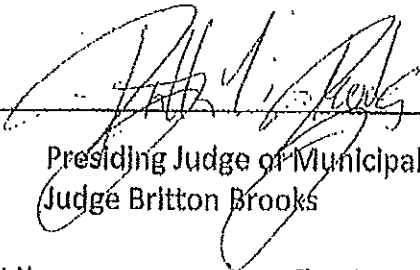
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 2 (two) hours.
2. Court staff will also do periodically wiping down frequently touched surfaces such as doors and countertops throughout the day.
3. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.

Other

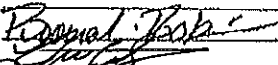

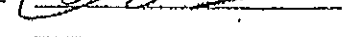

Remote hearings via Zoom teleconferencing or telephone will be encouraged for all persons having business before the court.

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: 5/22/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court
Judge Britton Brooks

	Date	Print Name	Signature
<input type="checkbox"/> Presiding Judge	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Prosecutor	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Court Clerk	5/27/20	Brandi Robinson	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bailiff	5/27/2020	James Scott	
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Health Authority	5/27/2020	Jerry Bennett	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mayor	22 May 2020	Jamie Lawrence	
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Presiding Judge	_____	_____	_____