

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Woodville 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 Woodville Municipal Court will implement the following protective measures:

### **General**

1. The 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 judge 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 Judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020

### **Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Judge and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Temperatures will be taken of all staff upon entering the building for the day.
3. Judge 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. Judge and court staff will be required to wear face coverings when dealing with the public, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: Options available to handle cases by phone, email, mail, and a 24 hour dropbox are being encouraged to reduce any in-person dealings with court cases. Notices for these options are given to the defendant with their citation, as well as posted on our website and on the entrance to the court building. Pens used by the public will be collected after each use and disinfected.

### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Defendants will be scheduled for remote appearances unless an in-person appearance is absolutely necessary. Defendants will not be allowed to bring other guests with them to a hearing, unless witnesses to the case. Juvenile defendants shall be accompanied by one

parent/guardian and no other guests, including siblings. Accommodations will be made to comply with the Open Courts Provision but at no time will the courtroom exceed 25% normal 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. The 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. "COVID19 NOTICE- Please contact the court to make other arrangements for a hearing if you are over age 65 or have serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised by treatments for cancer, transplant, or by the use of immunosuppressants."
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by remote appearance via Zoom or mail appearance. In-person proceedings will only be scheduled when absolutely necessary and scheduled as to minimize risk to the individual.

### **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 is single occupancy and will only be available to those with business in the courtroom. Otherwise they will remain closed to the public.

### ***Courtroom/ Gallery***

4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
5. 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, clerk, 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 each payment window, outside of elevator on first floor, and inside the courtroom.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, and on the judge's bench.
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 courtroom, 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 courtroom.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the courtroom, the Bailiff will use a thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 99.6°F will be refused admittance to the courtroom.
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 face masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer.

## Face Coverings

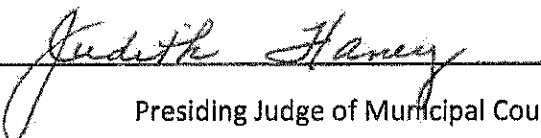
1. All individuals entering the court building will be encouraged to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the courtroom will be provided masks and required to wear them while in the courtroom.

## Cleaning & Disinfecting

1. Court staff will clean and disinfect the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned and disinfected at least every two hours.
2. Court staff will clean and disinfect the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. Court staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court staff have been trained on proper cleaning and disinfecting techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

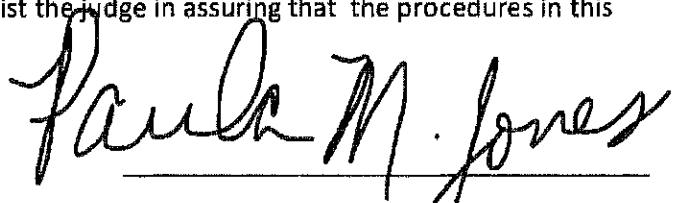
I am the only judge of court with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 6/1/2020

  
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

  
6/2/2020

As Mayor of the City of Woodville, I am aware and have been included in the development of this COVID-19 Operational Plan. I will assist the judge in assuring that the procedures in this Operational Plan will be consistent.



Mayor

Date

5/27/2020

As the Health Authority for the City of Woodville, I have review and provided opportunity to contribute to this COVID-19 Operational Plan. I will assist the judge in assuring that the procedures in this Operational Plan will be consistent.



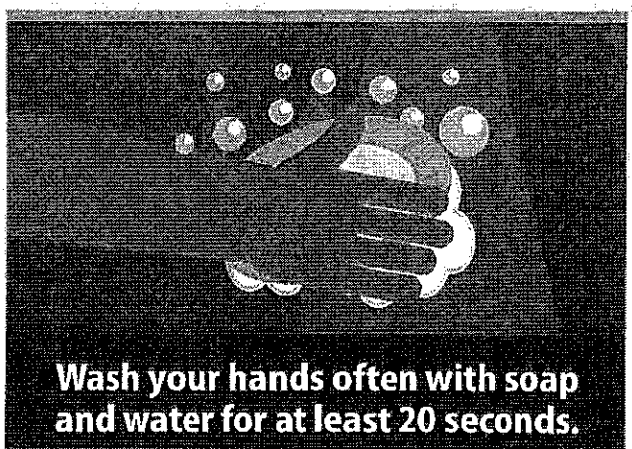
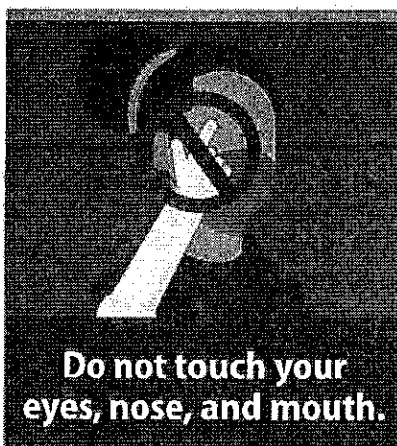
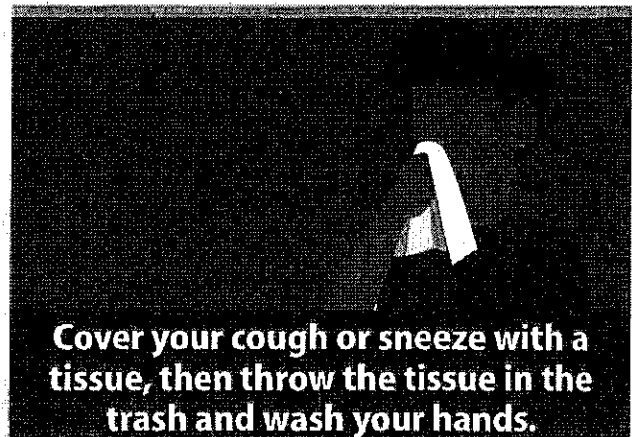
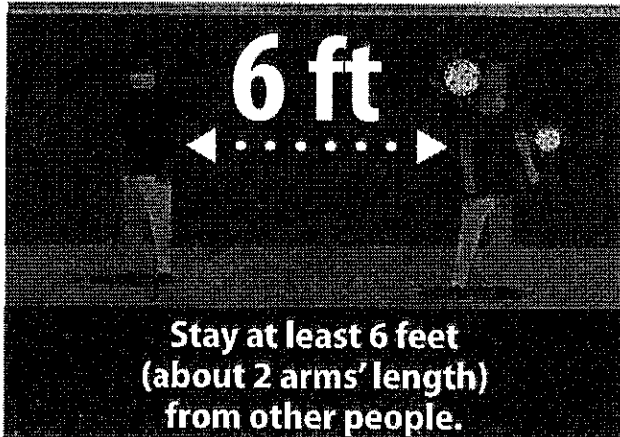
5/27/2020

Colin Bishop, REHS, RS  
Chief Health Inspector

Date

# Stop the Spread of Germs

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



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

11/27/2019 10:10:00 AM

# NOTICE

## VULNERABLE POPULATION ACCOMMODATIONS

THE FOLLOWING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS WILL BE ACCOMMODATED REGARDING COURT HEARINGS PURSUANT TO THE OPERATING PLAN OF THE TYLER COUNTY JUDICIARY:

- INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE OVER AGE 65
- INDIVIDUALS WITH SERIOUS UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS
- INDIVIDUALS IMMUNOCOMPROMISED
- INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE PREGNANT

ALL INDIVIDUALS IN THE VULNERABLE POPULATION CATEGORY HAVE THE OPTION TO PARTICIPATE REMOTELY. CONTACT THE COURT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.