

Amended COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN

City of Woodway Municipal Court, McLennan County Judiciary

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the building housing the court, the court of the **City of Woodway** 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. The presiding judge of the municipal court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and mayor to adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
3. 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 Monitoring Requirements: daily temperature monitoring, self-reporting.
2. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.4°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.

Those who are not allowed entry to the court due to the screening process can be allowed entry once they meet one of the following criteria:

- ***In the case of a person who had known close contact, the individual may return after 7 days from the last day of contact if there was a negative COVID-19 viral test on day 5 or later OR after 10 days from last contact if no test is done.*** A COVID-19 antibody test does not qualify.
 - In the case of a person who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to work when all three of the following criteria are met: at least 1 day (24 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; or
 - In the case of a person who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above; or
 - If the person has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.
3. Judges and court staff are encouraged to wear a face mask and practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
 4. Protective Measures: face masks covering the nostrils and mouth at all times, frequent hand washing/sanitizing.

Scheduling

1. To reduce the occupancy in the court building court staff will utilize Zoom, teleconference, online forms and payment options, emails, fax and mail when we can and limit the number on each docket to ensure there is adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet apart in the courtroom and allow only 2 people in the court lobby 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. 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 the court lobby.
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by remote hearings where possible, and scheduling individual hearings 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 5 feet. Social distancing stickers have been placed on the floor 6 feet apart.
2. Each restroom has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing.
3. 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. Less than 10 people at all times.
4. The courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.
5. In the courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerk station, and bailiff area 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 court window and inside the court room.
2. Disinfectant Wipes have been placed near the counsel tables, witness stand, and judge's bench.
3. Tissues have been placed at the court window and inside the court room.
4. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the bailiff or court clerk 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, the bailiff or court clerk will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.4°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 mask and surgical gloves.

Face Coverings


1. All Individuals entering the court building will be required to wear a face covering at all times. Signs are posted on the main doors of the lobby.
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.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned twice a day.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom between every hearing 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.

In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

 1/14/21

Rod Goble,

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court