

COVID-19 Operating Plan for Briarcliff Municipal Court

Effective June 9, 2020

Presiding Judge Kevin R. Madison

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the Justice Center building housing the court and the **Municipal Court of Briarcliff, Travis County, Texas** 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. The Court will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than **JUNE 9, 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: The Judge and court staff will submit to the measuring of their temperature before entering the courtroom or court offices. If any judge, court clerk, or court staff member has a temperature equal to or greater than 99.6°F, that person will not be permitted to enter the offices or courtroom and shall be sent home and should monitor their medical condition and seek the counsel and advice of their personal physician.
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. Judges and court staff should not come to work if they exhibit any of these symptoms or a fever equal to or greater than 99.6°F.
4. Judges and court staff are required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: All court staff and judges shall wear cloth, fabric, or surgical masks or bandana that completely cover their mouth and nose, practice social distancing of a minimum of 6 feet from any other person, using antimicrobial hand sprays and gels, such as Purell and Germ-X, utilize frequent hand washing, especially after handling any documents, touching any

doorknobs, computer keyboards, telephones, etcetera. Staff will also ensure that their immediate work area is periodically wiped down with cleaners that contain sanitizing properties that kill viruses and bacteria, such as **Clorox**[®] wipes and sprays.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
No more than **4 persons at a time** will be admitted into the courtroom, in addition to court security personnel, the judge, and the court clerk. All persons in the courtroom and in the lobby, waiting to be processed, shall wear cloth, fabric covering, bandana, or surgical mask that completely covers their mouth and nose and shall maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet between any other person, inside the courtroom and while in the court building, such as the lobby.

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 telephone, tele conference or videoconference.

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 has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity has been posted on each restroom door.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

5. 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.
6. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

7. 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 near the entrances to the building and in the courtroom.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom and in the hallway.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations in the court building.

Screening of all Persons Entering Court Building

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, Court staff and/or 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 will be advised that the court will re-set their court date and that they can contact the court to re-set their appearance or hearing via tele-conference or via video-conferencing.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, Court staff or Bailiffs will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 99.6°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 face masks and gloves. It is highly encouraged that screening personnel also wear goggles or glasses, since tear ducts are known to be a point of entry for the COVID-19 virus.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times, which shall be either cloth or fabric covering, bandana, or surgical mask that completely covers their mouth and nose.
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.

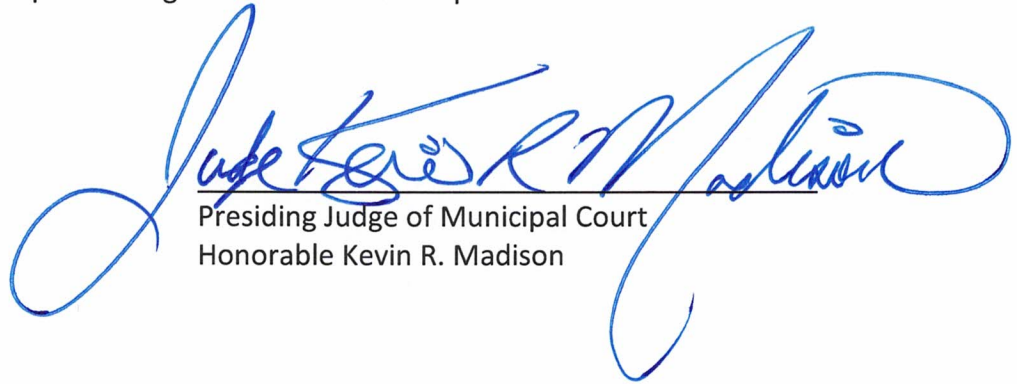
Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces, such as counter-tops are cleaned and sanitized at least once every 8 hours, during times that the Court is open to the public.
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 such as **Clorox®** wipes and sprays.

4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

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

Date: 5/14/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court
Honorable Kevin R. Madison