

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Brookshire Municipal 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 **Brookshire, 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, county judge and mayor adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city and county.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than July 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: On a daily basis Judges shall discuss with personal staff and clerks interacting with the Judge about the need for self-monitoring and reporting of any symptoms of COVID-19. Adequate precautions have been made to protect the income of employees affected by the need for remote working or quarantine. Judges and court staff will comply with the health requirements set out in this Plan.
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. Screening will include all staff every day and encourage staff to leave building should they begin to feel ill.
4. During any in-person hearings or dockets, Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times. Alternatively, if clear shielding is available, such shielding will be placed in such a manner to protect the Judge, the court staff, any witnesses, attorneys, and others attending any in-person court proceeding. While in chambers

and staff work areas common to the Courts' chambers, masks or face coverings are optional, but must be made available to those who wish to use them.

5. Protective Measures: Refer to item no. 4 above.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
Court scheduling prior to the COVID-19 occurrence was the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month except on a holiday. Pleas from defendants will be taken on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Show causes, pretrial motions and plea negotiations with the prosecutors are done on the 4th Thursday of the month. The Court will encourage defendants to make contact with the Court by alternative means prior to their appearance date.
2. Court may increase the requirements contained in this Plan but may not decrease or diminish such requirements.

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. 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 in both English and Spanish will be posted on the courts' websites and in conspicuous locations around the court area and city hall building (a copy of which is attached).
2. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by being given an opportunity to appear by teleconference, to submit necessary information in written form, or by rescheduling of the in-person hearing until a time after the crisis has diminished.

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

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.
6. Areas in the building where staff might congregate, such as breakrooms will abide by social distancing rules.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the city hall building, entrance to the court office, outside of the council chambers/courtroom and outside of the restrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations in the court area and city hall.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the city hall building to the courtroom, 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.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the city hall building to the courtroom, 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. 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 masks, gloves, and as requested, visors or safety glasses..

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.

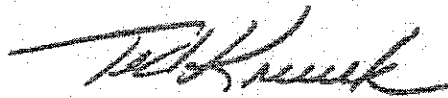
Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 8 hours or at least once a day.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the council chambers/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.

Other

1. All of the trial courts of Waller County may take any other reasonable actions necessary to avoid exposing all court proceedings to the threat of COVID-19.
2. This Order may be extended or modified by written Order of this Court without notice. Any extension or modification shall be delivered to all Judges, Clerk of the Court/Staff, City Secretary, Mayor and Municipal Court Prosecutor of the City of Brookshire, Texas and its website at:
<https://www.brookshiretexas.org/administration/page/municipal-court>

I have attempted to confer with all judges holding court for the City of Brookshire, Texas regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the state's local health authority and the county judge and mayor. Documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of the Brookshire Municipal Court, with the Court utilizing the Council Chambers as a courtroom in the City Hall building covered by this Operating Plan remain consistent with the plan.



Date: 7/8/2020

Ted Krenek

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court



Allen Anderson
July 9, 2020

**NOTICE TO
VULNERABLE POPULATION INDIVIDUALS**

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*.

Except for specific legal requirements, members of vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by being given an opportunity to appear by teleconference, to submit necessary information in written form, or by rescheduling of the in-person hearing until a time after the COVID-19 crisis has diminished.

Contact the Court for further information.

281-375-5048

Fax: 281-934-4960

email:

<https://www.brookshiretexas.org/administration/page/municipal-court>

Aviso a personas de la población vulnerable

Las personas mayores de 65 años y personas con condiciones de salud subyacentes graves, como presión arterial alta, enfermedad pulmonar crónica, diabetes, obesidad, asthma y aquellos cuyos sistemas inmunes están comprometidos como por quimioterapia para el cáncer o otra condición que requiera dicha terapia se consideran *poblaciones vulnerables*.

Excepto por requisitos legales específicos, los miembros de poblaciones vulnerables que están programados para la corte serán acomodados al tener la oportunidad de presentarse por teleconferencia, para presentar la información necesaria por escrito, o reprogramando la audiencia en persona hasta un momento después de la crisis de COVID-19 ha disminuido.

Contacte a la corte para más información.

281-375-5048

Fax: 281-934-4960

email:

<https://www.brookshiretexas.org/administration/page/municipal-court>

NOTICE OF ONLINE COURT PROCEEDINGS

This Court has a YouTube Channel that allows compliance with the open courts requirements of the Texas and U.S. Constitutions.

The matters on the attached notice of setting or docket that are identified as “Zoom” will appear on that channel at the posted time. Matters are frequently passed or rescheduled.

Therefore, be prepared for changes to the schedule.

The YouTube Channel URL for this Court is as follows:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1usUTXdL9VQrYAI0nBT4cQ>
