

# **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Burleson 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 court of **Burleson, 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. 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: all personnel working in the courthouse will have their temperature taken inside the employee entrance each time they enter the building, if greater than 99.6°F they will be required to leave until such time as it is in a normal range. They will be required to wash their hands or use sanitizer upon arrival.
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 times.
5. Protective Measures: temperatures will be checked, hand sanitizer will be available at multiple locations, clerks (other than courtroom) will have all interaction with the public from the other side of the glass in the payment stations, marshals will be required to be masked anytime there are nonemployee individuals in the courthouse. Defendants will be kept at a distance from the Judge and clerks in the courtroom. The number of people allowed in the courtroom/lobby will be at or below the 25% threshold of the occupancy levels posted on the building.

## **Scheduling**

1. Court schedules are split adding additional times established to reduce occupancy in the court building:  
Dockets will be split in half and scheduled with additional times added as needed.

### **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 giving them options to come at additional times, options to come in after the docket if they arrive at a regular docket or resetting to a later date.

### **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. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snackrooms, have been closed to the public.

#### *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 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 feet between each space.

### **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
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 on each floor of the court building.

### **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, a city marshal 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 city marshal 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 mask and 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**

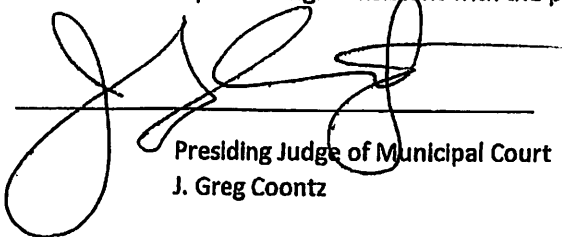
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 2 hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom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

### **Other**

On the date of the Vulnerable Population docket, one marshal will meet Defendants in the parking lot and give them the option of waiting in the courtroom or lobby (if there is space) or waiting in their car in the parking lot. Upon entering the courthouse a different marshal will perform a temperature scan and provide a facemask if their temperature is under 100 degrees and they will proceed through security. This marshal will also enforce spacing in the lobby. The third marshal will handle security and spacing in the courtroom. Defendants will be advised they should plan on attending without additional family members (excluding juveniles) because of the limited room when enforcing social distancing guidelines, however it will be kept in mind the hearings are open to the public. On the dates of all other dockets, Defendants will be informed of their waiting options once they approach the security station.


I have conferred with all judges of this court 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 the court will conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 6/4/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court  
J. Greg Coontz

Approved:



Steve Martin MD.

Dr. Steve Martin, MD  
City of Burleson Public Health Authority



Ken Shetter

Honorable Ken Shetter  
Mayor Burleson, Texas