

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Grey Forest Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judge(s), and other individuals entering the buildings housing the court, the City of Grey Forest Municipal court 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 to adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 15, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. The 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: Health Screening will be done each day and before each court session.
3. The 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, nausea, vomiting, joint pain, 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 time.
5. Protective Measures: In case a Judge or court staff has any of the above symptoms they will be sent home. The Judge or court staff will not be allowed to return to work unless the individual obtains a medical professional note clearing the individual for return.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
Court dates will be scheduled on or after June 15, 2020.

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. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by being seated first and will be seen first.

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 have been closed to the public.
4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the courtroom is to be no more than nine (9) people (this includes court personnel and bailiff); such will be posted outside the courtroom. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
5. The courtroom seats and areas will be marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.
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 the courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and the court counter.
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, designated officer will ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish; have a cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, joint pain, muscle aches, chills, sore throat, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell; 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, designated office 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 mask and disposable 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 required to wear a mask. If a mask is not available your case may be reset for a later date.

Cleaning

1. Court staff will clean the counter and the area of the court, including bench, after every person that comes in contact with the area.

2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom before and after each session.
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.
5. Each pen at the clerk's counter will be sanitized with the appropriate cleaning supplies.

In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan.

Date: 6/7/2020



Michael R. Latimer
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

I certify that the City of Grey Forest Municipal court has consulted with me on the above operating plan and will take the necessary measures to protect individuals that attend any court proceedings.



Mitch Thornton
Mayor, City of Grey Forest

COVID-19 Notice

The City of Grey Forest is following the guidance of the CDC and may be conducting screen test before you enter any common area of the court. Mask may be required in all parts of the common court areas. No other person will be allowed with you unless you are a parent/guardian of a juvenile.

You will not be allowed into the court room until your assigned time. If court proceedings are running late court staff will provide a sign in sheet for you. You will be notified to enter by a text/phone call you provide on the sign in sheet.

Please understand that we are taking all precautions for you as well as our staff. Please refrain from entering City Hall if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Fever
- Sore Throat
- Body Aches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Joint Pain
- Shortness of Breath
- Difficulty Breathing
- Chills, Repeated Shaking with Chills
- Loss of Taste or Smell
- Diarrhea
- Have been in contact with a known or suspected COVID-19 patient

The Municipal Court is allowing defendants to dispose eligible cases by mail/email and fax. Contact the court no later than 24 hours before your court date to determine if your case is eligible.