

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the CITY OF HALLETTSVILLE MUNICIPAL COURT, LAVACA COUNTY TEXAS

The Hallettsville Municipal Court is not open for public access at this time, but will update according to guidance of the City of Hallettsville Council, State Government or Federal Government further directions.

Current Modified Operations:

1. The Court will not be holding dockets (scheduled court dates) until after June 1, 2020.
2. The Court phone lines are open Monday through Friday from **8AM-4:30PM**; The Court accepts payments by mail, money order, checks, and credit card payments by phone and payments through the City of Hallettsville night deposit/slot outside of the City Hall Building, 101 N. Main Street.
3. Defendants may plea Guilty or Nolo Contendere in writing with signature, By email, fax or via US Postal Service. Please include your name (printed legible), date of birth, current address, email address (if any) current phone number, citation and/or docket number of charge(s), including the name of charge/violation(s).
4. Defendants who would like to plea Not Guilty, must send a written notice indicating your plea either by email or postal mail. This information will be presented to the City Prosecutor for review and providing discovery. The trial/docket will not be set until the court resumes to full operation.
5. Request for extension regarding cases that have Judge's Order must be submitted in writing by postal mail or email for the Judge's consideration. Please include your citation/docket number, name, current address, date of birth, email address and current contact number.

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 City of Hallettsville Municipal Court** will implement the following protective measures:

General:

1. The Judge 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 City of Hallettsville Municipal Court is not set up to conduct court remotely (at this Time)
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. The Judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than **June 29, 2020**

Judge and Court Staff Health:

1. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: **check temperature, mask and glove requirements, disinfecting and six (6') feet personal distancing.**
2. Judge 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.
3. Judge and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Protective Measures: *Same as # 1 above.*

Scheduling:

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: ***By scheduling court docket appearances at 45-minute increments between defendant's schedules, require defendants to call the court before entering.***

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, chronic kidney disease, 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 ***contacting the court by phone, advising the court of their health conditions, checking each defendant situation, physician/doctor letter or note, re-scheduling docket for later date or taking care of obligation by phone.***

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. Public common areas are closed to the public.

Gallery

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.

Well

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.

Hygiene:

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrance to the building, 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.
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, **the Bailiff and/or a Nurse** 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 and/or a Nurse** 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. 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 100.4°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 **mask, gloves, sanitizers**.

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 hour or after each case heard..
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 effective against the coronavirus and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

I have conferred with the City Administrator, Mayor and Lavaca County Health Authority 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 judge and staff of courtroom in the court building is covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 05/05/2020



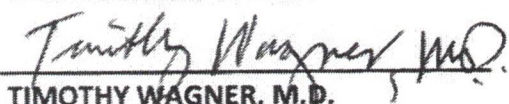
MARK IVEY, MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE
CITY OF HALLETTSVILLE
LAVACA COUNTY, TEXAS

APPROVED BY:



ALICE JO SUMMER - MAYOR
CITY OF HALLETTSVILLE

APPROVED BY:



TIMOTHY WAGNER, M.D.
LAVACA COUNTY HEALTH AUTHORITY

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, chronic kidney disease, 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. Any defendants that qualify under the definition of Vulnerable Population, are ordered by Municipal Court Judge to notify the court of your condition of Vulnerable Population reference to your docket or court notification. The Municipal Court Judge will review the case, findings and set the accommodation in accordance to his review.
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by contacting the court by phone, advising the court of their health conditions, checking each defendant situation, physician/doctor letter or note, re-scheduling docket for later date or taking care of obligation by phone.