

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan for Haslet Municipal Court, Tarrant County 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 Haslet 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. The Honorable Judge Bradley will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and the Court Administrator and adjust this operating plan as necessary.
3. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than July 14, 2020.

### **Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: The Judge, Prosecutor, Bailiff, and court staff must pass a temperature and health questionnaire screening prior to reporting to work in the Court offices, or courtroom. Each person must also sign in upon entering the building to aid in contact tracing.
2. 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.
3. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Protective Measures: All employees will be provided a mask and an individual hand sanitizer. The Court lobby window has protective glass which provides a barrier between the defendants and court clerks.
5. One defendant at a time will be allowed in the court lobby, others will be required to wait outside or in their vehicle until the lobby is vacated by the previous defendant. This will be posted on the court lobby door, and the clerk at the window will verbally reinforce this safety measure.

### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Haslet Municipal Court holds hearings once a month. Defendants will be scheduled periodically throughout the day so that no more than 9 defendants are in the courtroom at one time. Defendants will be scheduled at 20 minute increments in an attempt to limit interaction amongst defendants as well as court personnel.

2. Pre COVID-19, Haslet Municipal Court held court once a month, in an effort to circumvent further delays in administering justice, it may be necessary to add an additional court day to safely schedule cases that have been placed on hold.

#### **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. Since the courtroom is considered an "Open Court" setting, we cannot deny people entry. However the Judge can temporarily suspend allowing children in the courtroom, and implement certain restrictions such as requiring them to wear protective masks and not allowing more than 9 people in the courtroom at one time.
2. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Chairs will be placed 6 feet apart, which will allow a maximum of 9 chairs in the court room.
3. Spacing requirements will be marked on the floor to ensure proper distance between defendants as they are screened and signed in. After being screened and signed in, defendants will have the choice to wait in the courtroom or in their vehicles, and will be telephoned when they are ready to be seen.
4. The Prosecutor's conference room will have excess chairs removed, and remaining chairs placed to maintain at least 6 feet of distance.

#### **Well**

1. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and 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 at the entrance to the courtroom. Hand sanitizer bottles have been placed at the Judge's bench, the Prosecutor's conference room, and the screening/sign-in table.
2. As we still need to obtain defendant signatures on court order acknowledgements and credit card authorizations, hand sanitizer will be placed at the court lobby window.
3. The lobby will be sanitized multiple times a day by court personnel to include wiping down the door handles, writing instruments after each use, and lobby the window/desk.
4. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, the Judge's bench, and the Prosecutor's conference room.
5. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations of the courtroom, and court lobby.
6. The City of Haslet contracts with a company that cleans the offices and bathrooms bi-weekly. The inability to have those facilities deep cleaned daily led to the decision to close the courtroom bathrooms and drinking fountain. This decision was made by the Fire Chief and Court Administrator. The Court has made every effort to limit the time a defendant is required to be in the courtroom to be less than one hour. This information will be included on the court hearing notice sent to each defendant, verbally when reminder calls are made, and at the entrance to the courtroom.

**Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the courtroom, the Balliff 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, have 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. Individuals who indicate yes to any of these questions will be refused admittance to the court building.
2. Defendants will be required to sign in which will aid in the effort of contact tracing.
3. Staff who are screening individuals entering the courtroom will be provided personal protective equipment, including a protective mask, gloves, and sanitizer.

**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.

**Cleaning**

1. Court staff will sanitize the door handles every thirty minutes. Surfaces such as the Prosecutor's conference room table will be sanitized after each pretrial hearing.
2. Court staff will sanitize shared writing instruments after each use.

This plan has been reviewed and approved by the Haslet Municipal Court Judge and the Haslet Fire Chief and will remain in effect until such time as the Fire Chief notifies the Court Administrator that it is no longer required. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and documentation is attached to this plan. I will ensure that court personnel in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

  
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Judge Bradley

  
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Fire Chief, Kirt Mays

6/3/20  
Date

6/4/20  
Date