

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan City of Helotes Municipal Court, Bexar County**

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 Helotes 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, from the Texas Department of State Health Services, Region 8 Public Health Authority Medical Director and the mayor of Helotes and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in Bexar County.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020

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

1. Judges and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework if possible.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Self-monitor for symptoms, check temperature twice a day, watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, and other symptoms of COVID-19 as listed under the CDC Guidelines (attached).
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 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 when not able to practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times as directed by Governor Abbott's Report to Reopen Texas Minimum Standard Health Protocols (attached).
5. Protective Measures: to reduce risk, employees will clean hands often, either with soap and water for 20 seconds or use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, avoid close contact with people who are sick, physical distancing by putting distance between other people (at least 6 feet), use of face coverings when necessary, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue away in the trash, clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily.

### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules will be established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Set strict appointment times and stagger court dockets to keep a large number of individuals from convening in the court building.

### **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 set appointment times to reduce exposure to individuals and be offered a remote hearing appointment through the Zoom platform.

### **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. No more than two individuals not from the same household will be permitted in the court building at a time. If more than one individual from the same household is in the court building, no other individuals will be permitted in the building.
3. 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.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.
5. To maintain proper social distancing protocols, tape will be placed on the floor around the court building measuring six feet apart.

### **Court Common Areas/Courtroom Chambers**

6. 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.
7. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.
8. In the 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 around the court building.
2. Tissues have been placed in the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.
3. The Center for Disease Control's, "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" (attached) has been posted in multiple locations in the court building.
4. After an individual speaks with either the judge or prosecutor, the area and any items touched by the individual shall be disinfected.
5. All court personnel will need to wash or disinfect hands upon entering and after any interaction with employees, other individuals or items handled during normal business.

## **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, court bailiffs will ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish; have a cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, experiencing 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, court 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 holding facility to the court building will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and have their temperature taken prior to being transported. 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: face masks 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 may be provided.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court building for over 1 hour may be provided surgical masks and required to wear them while in the court building.

## **Cleaning**

1. Court staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every couple of hours.
2. Court staff will clean the courtroom between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.

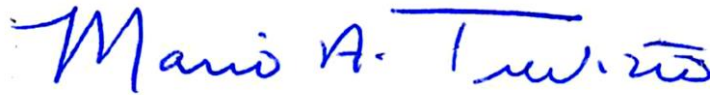
3. Court staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

**Other**

1. Court proceedings may take place outside to ensure individuals are not in a confined space and allow for social distancing requirements. In case the weather does not allow for court proceedings to take place outside, individuals will be seen inside the court chambers located in city hall.
2. Individuals will check-in and be asked to wait in their vehicles until the court calls or text them to be seen.

I have attempted to confer with all judges of the court regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority Texas Department of State Health Services, Region 8 Public Health Authority Medical Director and the mayor of the City of Helotes, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of the court and all court personnel in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

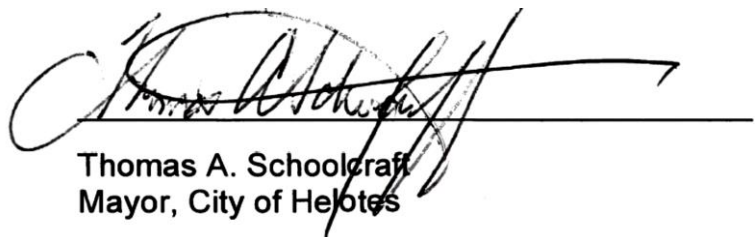
**Date:** 6/1/2020



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Presiding Judge of Municipal Court, City of Helotes, Bexar County, Texas

I certify the Helotes 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.



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Thomas A. Schoolcraft  
Mayor, City of Helotes

REVISED MAY 5, 2020

# MINIMUM STANDARD HEALTH PROTOCOLS



## CHECKLIST FOR ALL EMPLOYERS

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*The following are the minimum recommended health protocols for all businesses choosing to operate in Texas. Employers may adopt additional protocols consistent with their specific needs and circumstances to help protect the health and safety of all employees, contractors, and customers.*

*The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas. The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities. We should continue to observe practices that protect everyone, including those who are most vulnerable.*

*Please note, public health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. Employers should stay informed and take actions based on common sense and wise judgment that will protect health and support economic revitalization. Employers should also be mindful of federal and state employment and disability laws, workplace safety standards, and accessibility standards to address the needs of both workers and customers.*

### Health protocols for your employees and contractors:

- Train all employees on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
- Screen employees and contractors before coming into the business:
  - Send home any employee or contractor who has any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:

- Cough	- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	- Loss of taste or smell
- Chills	- Diarrhea
- Repeated shaking with chills	- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Muscle pain	- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19
- Headache	
  - Do not allow employees or contractors with new or worsening signs or symptoms listed above to return to work until:
    - In the case of an employee or contractor who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to work when all three of the following criteria are met: at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing

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# MINIMUM STANDARD HEALTH PROTOCOLS



## ALL EMPLOYERS: Page 2 of 2

medications); and the individual has *improvement* in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*; or

- In the case of an employee or contractor who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to work until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above; or
- If the employee or contractor has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.

Do not allow an employee or contractor with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 to return to work until the end of the 14 day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure (with an exception granted for healthcare workers and critical infrastructure workers).

Have employees and contractors wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the business.

Have employees and contractors maintain at least 6 feet separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, other measures such as face covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced.

If an employer provides a meal for employees and/or contractors, employers are recommended to have the meal individually packed for each individual.

Consistent with the actions taken by many employers across the state, consider having all employees and contractors wear cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). If available, employees and contractors should consider wearing non-medical grade face masks.

### Health protocols for your facilities:

If 6 feet of separation is not available between employees, contractors, and/or customers inside the facility, consider the use of engineering controls, such as dividers between individuals, to minimize the chances of transmission of COVID-19

Regularly and frequently clean and disinfect any regularly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, and restrooms.

Disinfect any items that come into contact with customers.

Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available to employees, contractors, and customers.

Place readily visible signage at the business to remind everyone of best hygiene practices.

For employers with more than 10 employees and/or contractors present at one time, consider having an individual wholly or partially dedicated to ensuring the health protocols adopted by the employer are being successfully implemented and followed.



## SPECIAL GUIDANCE FOR TEXANS OVER 65

**People 65 years or older, especially people 65 years or older with medical issues like heart disease, diabetes, cancer, or a weakened immune system, are at a higher risk for getting very sick or dying from COVID-19.** Every Texan is part of the solution. Strictly adhere to all [CDC guidelines](#), as well as all recommendations in this document.

### 1. STAY HOME IF YOU CAN

- Minimize face-to-face contact with others. Avoid young children.
- If someone is assisting you, you and your family members or caretaker should wear cloth face masks. Remember a family member or caretaker can give you the virus even if they don't appear to have symptoms.
- Try grocery or restaurant delivery, mail order prescriptions, and phone appointments with your doctor. **Call 2-1-1 if you need help with essentials.**
- Reach out to friends, family, or neighbors who can deliver essential items.

### 2. HELP SAVE LIVES

- If you must go out, wear a cloth face mask, and stay six feet away from others.
- Wash your hands often and for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Disinfect surfaces, buttons, handles, knobs, and other places touched often.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils with others.
- If you have mild symptoms (difficulty breathing, or a rapidly worsening cough or fever), call your healthcare provider. **If symptoms are severe, call 9-1-1.**

### 3. CHECK IN

- Check in regularly with neighbors, friends, and family by calling, texting, emailing, video chatting, or even writing letters.
- Walking, gardening, digital books, games, and online religious services are great ways to stay active and connected.

# Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



When in public, wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth.



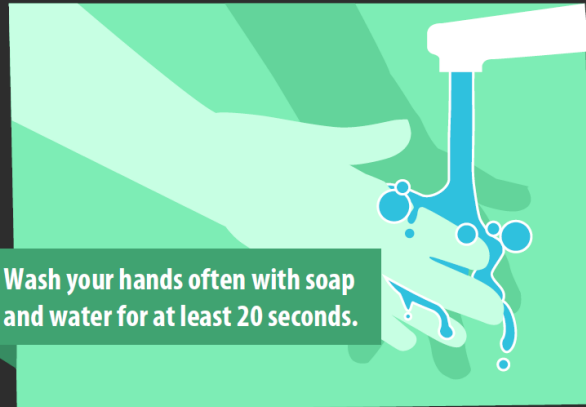
Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)