

COVID-19 Operating Plan City of Hill Country Village 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 Hill Country Village 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 Hill Country Village 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 wash 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.

June 2020

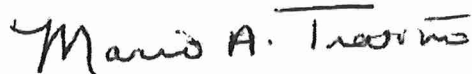
3. Court staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

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



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court, City of Hill
Country Village, Bexar County, Texas

I certify the Hill Country Village 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.



Gabriel Durand - Hollis
Mayor, City of Hill Country Village