

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Killeen City 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 court, the court of **the City of Killeen** 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, and 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 1st.

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. To ensure time to sanitize workstations, limited lobby hours will temporarily be in place as follows:
 - a. Monday – Friday – 8:30 am to 4 pm
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Judges and Court staff will have their temperatures taken and will be required to answer whether they are experiencing the symptoms listed in 2a prior to entry into the facility each day.
 - a. 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 in the courtroom, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Other Protective Measures:
 - a. Hand sanitizer will be provided at each workstation.
 - b. Signage reminding staff to follow CDC guidelines will be posted in staff working areas, the courtroom, restrooms, and breakroom facilities.
 - c. Breakrooms will be modified to allow only 3 people at any given time, and community appliances such as microwaves, refrigerators, sinks, and coffee makers will be properly wiped down after each use.

- d. Court staff will be required to wear gloves when handling physical documentation or cash transactions.
- e. Clerk counter windows will be modified to reduce the transmission of germs.
- f. Only alternate clerk's windows will be open at any given time, to ensure proper distancing.

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).

Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated in the following manner:

- a. If a court hearing becomes required, it will be scheduled remotely or telephonically whenever possible. If the hearing must be held in person, the policies regarding social distancing, and the use of personal protective equipment detailed in this policy will be strictly enforced.

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, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.
4. Lobby seating areas have been marked to identify appropriate social distancing.

Gallery

5. 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.
6. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

7. 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 entrances to the building, outside of the courtroom, and inside of the lobby.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, in the pretrial conference/jury area, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations in the court building.

Screening

1. Signage will be prominently displayed at the entrance to the courthouse, indicating that if individuals 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 will be instructed that they must immediately exit the building and contact the court by phone or email.
2. When individuals enter the courtroom, the Municipal Court Bailiff 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 courtroom.
3. Staff who are screening individuals entering the courtroom will be provided personal protective equipment, including gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant spray or wipes.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the courtroom 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 building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned each day.
2. Court staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used. All court benches and seating areas will be properly sanitized after each court session.
3. Court staff will clean door and other items such as doorknobs, counters, pen pads, etc. every two hours.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
5. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

1. Whenever possible communication between court staff and defendants will be virtual or telephonic.

2. Expanded telephone and written request options will be provided to defendants in handling their cases to minimize the need for an in-person appearance.
3. Electronic document submission by defendants will be facilitated and encouraged both at the clerk's counter and in the courtroom, to minimize transfer of physical documentation from person to person.
4. Document transfer between court staff and judges will be done electronically whenever possible.

I have attempted to confer with all judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building 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 judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.




Mark D. Kirnball
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

5/28/2020

Date

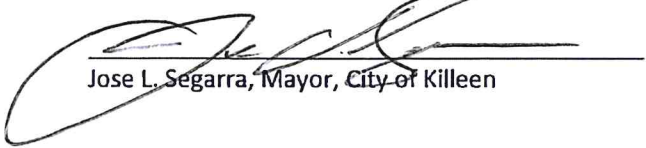
Reviewed and Approved by:



Amanda Chadwell, MPH, PhDD, Bell County Public
Health District (Local Health Authority)

5/28/20

Date



Jose L. Segarra, Mayor, City of Killeen

5/29/20

Date

Billy Ray Stubblefield, Presiding Judge of the
Third Administrative Judicial Region

Date