

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of La Villa, Hidalgo 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 **City of La Villa** 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/Court Clerk will maintain regular communication with the Interim City Administrator/Mayor who will intern communicate with the local health dept. In adjusting this operating plan, as necessary.
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 when possible. (optional)
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Once a week report health condition.
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 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, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures:

Scheduling

1. Same schedule, however, individuals will be signing in at the entrance of the building. The bailiff/court clerk will be assisting. The individual will be required to return to their vehicle and will be called one at a time to enter the courtroom. This would reduce occupancy in the courtroom.

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 allowing individuals to come in one at a time to the courtroom.

Social Distancing

1. All persons who are permitted in the courtroom will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet.
2. Public restrooms will be closed to the public.
3. The maximum number of persons permitted to the courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
4. The courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.
5. 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 at the entrances to the building.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, and on the judges' bench
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations in the building where the courtroom will be held.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the courtroom, Bailiff/court clerk 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 courtroom, Bailiff/court clerk(optional) will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°F will be refused admittance to the court building.
3. Inmates being transported from the jail to the courtroom 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 99.6°F will not be transported to the court building. The screening will be conducted by the Police Dept.
4. Staff who are screening individuals entering the courtroom will be provided personal protective equipment...

Face Coverings

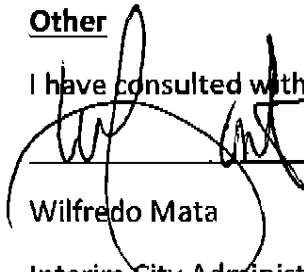
1. All individuals entering the courtroom will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.

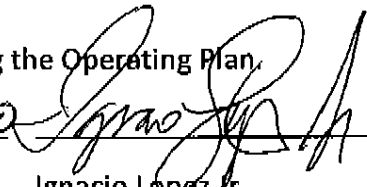
Cleaning

1. Courtroom cleaning will be conducted by city employees who will clean the common areas of the courtroom so that common spaces are cleaned daily.
2. Courtroom cleaning by city employees will clean the courtroom before court proceedings
3. Courtroom cleaning by city employees have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Courtroom cleaning by city employees have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

I have consulted with the City Manager regarding the Operating Plan.



Date: 5/22/20 

Date: 5-22-2020

Wilfredo Mata

Ignacio Lopez Jr.

Interim City Administrator

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

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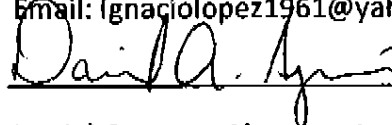
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 Date: 5-22-2020

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