

# **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Lampasas Municipal Court**

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the building housing the Lampasas Municipal Court, the 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 Lampasas Municipal Court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and the Mayor of the City of Lampasas to adjust this Operating Plan as necessary.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than August 10, 2020, at the sole discretion of the Judge. No judge will be required to begin in-person proceedings.

## **Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Judges and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Judges and court staff shall follow recommendations of the OCA and CDC. Self-monitoring of daily temperature prior to entering the building is required.
3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100°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. During the work day, should any Judge or court staff begin experiencing any of the above-described symptoms, they will notify the appropriate person, immediately leave the work place and should seek medical advice.
4. Judges and court staff will report any possible exposure to the appropriate person, immediately leave the workplace and should seek medical advice.
5. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times. Face coverings will not be necessary during electronic sessions.
6. Protective Measures: Court staff working the service window are separated from the public by a sneeze guard. Staff will be provided with hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes or sanitizing

spray and disposable toweling. Gloves as PPE are to be used when cleaning common areas and discarded after cleaning. Signage and floor markings are in place for social distancing.

### **Scheduling**

1. Each individual judge shall be responsible for scheduling his/her dockets in a manner that complies with all regulations and recommendations of the OCA, CDC and contained in this Operating Plan. All court schedules shall be established to reduce occupancy in the court building. Remote access to the court by phone, fax, email, mail, 24-hour drop box and ZOOM will be utilized. Notice of these options will be posted on the court's website, on the answering system and outside 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. The 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 court's website 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 scheduling a remote video conference hearing without necessity of attending in-person proceedings.

### **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. The court building has established: a one-way entrance and exit pattern on the first floor; designated 6' social distancing marks on the floor; and a maximum capacity notice for the first floor lobby/service area, with instructions to wait in vehicle until capacity has been reduced.
3. Children and guests accompanying any person conducting business with the court are not allowed. Juvenile defendants shall be accompanied by only one (1) parent or guardian and no other guests, including siblings, are allowed.
4. No more than two individuals not from the same household will be permitted in an elevator. If more than one individual from the same household is in an elevator, no other individuals will be permitted in the elevator.

5. During the court's remote-access-only appearance/hearing period, public restrooms are not available to any walk-in customers of the building that houses the Lampasas Municipal Court. When in-person appearances/hearings are resumed, 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.
6. Any other public common areas have been closed to the public.

#### *Gallery*

7. 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.
8. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

#### *Well*

9. In each 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 are available at the front-line service areas on the first floor of the building, outside of elevators on each floor and outside of the courtroom.
2. Tissues have been placed at the service window, 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 on each floor of the court building.

#### **Screening**

1. The court bailiff or court staff will ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish, have a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, diarrhea, or loss of taste or smell. Individuals who indicate yes to any of these questions will leave the court building and will receive accommodations, such as resetting their proceeding.
2. The court bailiff or court staff will ask the individuals if they have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Individuals who indicate yes will be further screened and may be asked to leave the court building and receive accommodations, such as resetting their proceeding.
3. The court bailiff or court staff will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 99.6°F will leave the court building.

4. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court building 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.
5. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including face coverings and gloves.

#### Face Coverings

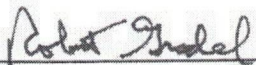
1. All individuals entering the court building for court hearings will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.

#### Cleaning

1. Court building staff and/or cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least two (2) times during the day.
2. Court building staff and/or cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. Court building staff and/or cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus and gloves as PPE.
4. Court building staff and/or cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

I am the only Judge with a courtroom in this court building, and have developed this Operating Plan. In developing this Operating Plan, I consulted with the local health authority and the Mayor of the City of Lampasas, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I ensure that I and any future judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan will conduct proceedings consistent with the Plan.

Date: 8-20-2020

  
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Presiding Judge, Robert Gradel  
Lampasas Municipal Court

### **NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATION**

You are considered a member of a vulnerable population if you:

1. Are over age 65;
2. Have a serious underlying health condition, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma;
3. Have a compromised immune system, such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy.

**IF** you are a member of a vulnerable population please **CONTACT THE COURT IMMEDIATELY**. The court staff will make accommodations for you, including resetting your appearance or hearing to a ZOOM appearance or hearing to ensure that you are not required to be present in the courtroom.