

**COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN**  
**FOR THE**  
**MUNICIPAL COURT OF THE CITY OF LAVON,**  
**COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS**

Pursuant to the Guidance for All Court Proceedings Occurring After June 1, 2020 issued by the Texas Office of Court Administration and the Twelfth Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster issued by the Supreme Court of the State of Texas, 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 Municipal Court of the City of Lavon, Collin County, Texas submits this COVID-19 Operating Plan to the Honorable Ray Wheless, Presiding Judge, First Administrative Judicial Region of Texas, and undertakes that it 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 5, 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.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Judges, Prosecutors, and Court Staff will submit to a laser-digital thermometer scan upon attempted entry,

operated by trained City personnel or designee, and will be asked to affirm whether or not they have recently or are experiencing the signs or symptoms of COVID-19 outlined in No. 3 immediately following.

3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.0°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: All Court personnel and individuals having business before the Court shall wear face coverings, practice social distancing – including from the Court bench, and shall cleanse their hands with sanitizer before approaching the bench or handing any paper document to the Court or Staff.

### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
  - a. The resolution of cases by mail or remotely will be encouraged based on the applicable provisions of the Local Rules of the Municipal Court and the Judge's Standing Orders, accepting pleas, and entering appropriate judgments and orders.
  - b. Mandatory or necessary and appropriate cases will be scheduled for personal appearance in hourly blocks according to the applicable provisions of the Local Rules of the Municipal Court and the Judge's Standing Orders, subject to special provisions of not more than 25% of room capacity permitted to enter at any given time, and then only according to a group numbering system.
  - c. The Group Numbering System implemented shall identify and assign numbers to a maximum number of parties and counsel who will be allowed in to the courtroom at a single time. Parties and counsel awaiting the call-up of their number may wait outside the Court building in their vehicles. Upon completion of their business before the Court they will exit and the next group will be called for admission.

- d. Such cases scheduled for Court hearings include General Appearance Dockets for entry of Pleas, Pre-trial conferences and Hearings, as well as Trials Before the Court. No Jury Trials will be routinely scheduled during the time these emergency procedures are in effect.
2. Other cases scheduled for a court appearance will be accommodated by making the option of remote hearing by Zoom or another tele-video conferencing available.

### **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. Information regarding face masks, social distancing, hand washing and sanitizing shall be included on every Court Appearance Notice or Letter sent to parties appearing before the Court. 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 making the option of remote hearing by Zoom or another tele-video conferencing available.

### **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 snackrooms, have been closed to the public.

### *Gallery*

4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined and posted (approximately 25% of ordinary maximum capacity as determined by the Fire Marshal). The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to the movable seats as situated and may not be moved by anyone except with permission of the Court.
6. To maximize the limited available seating, seating in the gallery of the courtroom will be generally limited to those having business before the Court. Exceptional requests should be communicated to the Court which will endeavor to accommodate reasonable requests.

### *Well*

7. 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 have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.
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. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the Bailiff assisted by designated trained staff 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 court building, trained City personnel or designee 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 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 100.0°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 a face mask and rubber 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 will be provided.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court building for over 1 hour will be provided surgical masks and required to wear them while in the court building if the supply is available.

### **Cleaning**

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every four hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

### **Other**

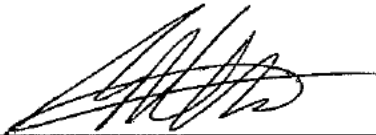
1. Disposable Pens and writing instruments will be provided to the parties for necessary signatures if they do not utilize their own. These are not to be shared among the defendants or reused by the Court Staff.
2. The Court Clerk shall be the custodian of all the personal protective equipment and pens to be utilized pursuant to this Plan and will be responsible for posting

the necessary Health Services Informational Notice and Flyer and making such Information available to each party attending Court in person.

3. The Presiding Judge will work with the Mayor and City Administrator of the City to attempt to develop a method for utilization of a protective hard clear plastic screen between the Judge and any person appearing before the Court at the Bench. Such a screen should also allow provision for ease of document transfer and necessary signatures.

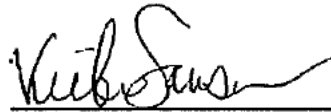
I have attempted to confer with all judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/20/2020

  
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Andrew D. Leonie  
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Affirmation of Consultation

I, Vicki Sanson, Mayor of the City of Lavon, affirm that I have consulted with Judge Andrew Leonie, Presiding Judge of the Municipal Court of the City of Lavon regarding this COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Municipal Court.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Vicki Sanson, Mayor

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I, Candy Blair, Collin County Health Care Services, affirm that I have consulted with Judge Andrew Leonie, Presiding Judge of the Municipal Court of the City of Lavon, regarding this COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Municipal Court

*See Attached email dated May 19, 2020*

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Candy Blair, Collin County Health Care Services

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[www.collincountytx.gov/healthcare\\_services/Pages/news.aspx](http://www.collincountytx.gov/healthcare_services/Pages/news.aspx)