

# **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the League City Municipal Court, Galveston 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 League City 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 and county judge 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 2, 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: Staff will check temperature daily before reporting to the office, hands must be washed upon entering and exiting the building.
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: See City of League City policy attached.

## **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:  
Court staff will work on a rotating schedule until May 31, 2020. Additional court dates have been added to reduce docket sizes.

## **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 resets, correspondence by phone, mail, email or fax.

### **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. 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 every other row.

### *Well*

6. 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 elevators on each floor, 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, bailiffs 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, 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 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.
4. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including masks and gloves.

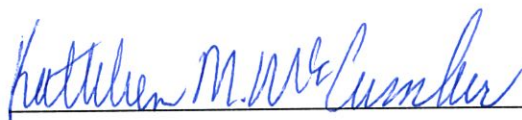
#### Face Coverings

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 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 3 hours on scheduled court days.
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.

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 county judge 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.



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Presiding Judge of Municipal Court



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## NOTICE TO VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

NOTICE- ANY PERSON WHO HAS BEEN DEEMED TO BE A VULNERABLE INDIVIDUAL AS DEFINED BELOW SHALL CONTACT THE COURT AT LEAST 48 HOURS PRIOR TO ANY APPEARANCE DATE AND/OR HEARING DATE AT THE OFFICIAL COURT TELEPHONE NUMBER AND/OR EMAILS ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE TO REQUEST TO HAVE THEIR IN-PERSON APPEARANCE WAIVED AND TO HAVE THEIR APPEARANCE TO BE SCHEDULED ELECTRONICALLY.

\*Vulnerable individuals are those 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.



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May 4, 2020

There are new guidelines that are going into effect for all City departments on May 4.

1. All employees will be screened prior to coming into a City building to work for their daily shift. We are still awaiting the arrival of digital thermometers to provide to every department, so until then employees are being asked to take their temperatures prior to their arrival at work. Questions regarding symptoms and any known close contact with a person who has been confirmed to have COVID-19 will be recorded by a department staff member as well.
2. Employees will be expected to wash or sanitize their hands upon entering work. Fortunately, many entrance/exit points now have sanitization stations.
3. Employees will maintain at least six feet separation from other individuals. Where distancing is not feasible, face masks will be made available. Employees will be allowed to wear face masks at any time they choose; however, employees will be required to wear a mask if working conditions or activities (e.g., meetings and/or gatherings) make social distancing impossible or impractical. The City has ordered cloth masks with a built-in insert pocket. In addition, a local business owner has been donating numerous cloth masks that she has handmade. The donations will come over the next several weeks. The ordered masks are also washable and should be arriving next week. This should provide employees with at least two masks to cycle through and wash as necessary. Some departments already have their own, so that will give many employees as many as three masks a week to cycle through. Don't forget to wash them for maximum benefit. A few departments have also been provided disposable N95 masks for use as well.
4. Any food that is provided to employees is recommended to be individually packaged to prevent any potential cross contamination. Keep that in mind as often things like kolaches, doughnuts and desserts are not separately packaged.

Please do your best to continue practicing social distancing and good hygiene practices. The City's Facilities Department has done an EXCELLENT job improving and maintaining the cleanliness across various City facilities. For those of you who have not been here in a few weeks, expect to see some improvements in our restroom facilities. Don't forget to thank them. They have a difficult job especially during this time where cleanliness and disinfection is very important