

**\*\*DECEMBER 2020 REVISED\*\*COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Lometa Municipal Court, Lampasas 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 the Lometa 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, 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 FEBRUARY 1, ~~2020~~<sup>2021</sup> as allowed the Supreme Court of Texas 29<sup>th</sup> emergency order to modify or suspend any and all deadlines and procedures stated until this period

**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: Temperatures will be taken of all individuals upon entering any buildings housing the court
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 practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.

5. **Protective Measures:** Staff are provided hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray for workstations, gloves and masks. Hand sanitizer is provided in the lobby for the public. The public/defendants are only allowed into city hall one at a time. Staff working the counter will be separated from the public/defendant with 6 feet social distancing. Options available to handle cases by phone, email and mail are being encouraged to reduce any in-person dealings with court cases. Notices for these options have been mailed and posted outside of the court and in city hall. Before any signature is required, the public/defendant will be required to use hand sanitizer. Any pen used by the public/defendant will be sprayed with disinfectant between uses.

### Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:

Notice will be sent out for the parties involved to contact the court and give exact reason if they are unable to appear remotely to ensure all guidelines have been met. If they can not appear remotely due to it being impossible or impracticable, they will be required to follow the courts safety procedures listed in the operating plan.

After screening, the defendant will sign into the court with their name and phone number. After signing in, the defendant will wait in his/her vehicle. Defendants will be called/text to enter the court room as allowed by social distancing practices. Upon entering the court room, defendants will be required to use hand sanitizer. Once seen by the Judge/Prosecutor, defendants will stay in the designated seat while payment/paperwork processing if necessary. Defendants will be let into city hall/courtroom one at a time unless parties are from the same household or a juvenile which requires a parent/guardian to be present.

### 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 a reset, phone conference or video docket.

### 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 the city hall. Court room lobby will be monitored for social distancing of at least 6 feet apart and enforced by court staff/ city hall staff.

### Lobby

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.

Well

5. 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 inside the 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, court 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, court staff 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 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 face mask, gloves and hand sanitizer.

### 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.

### Cleaning

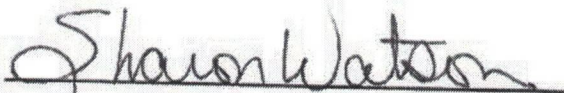
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 4 hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom 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.

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.

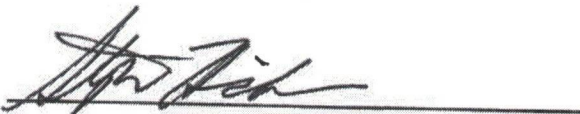
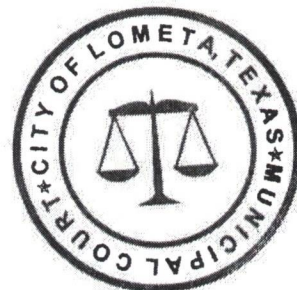
**Objective criteria determining in person proceeding**

1. Inability of parties to participate due to lack of technology, internet, device necessary or knowledge/ skills necessary to appear remotely.
2. Disability to which appearing remotely would be impracticable or impossible.
3. Indigent.
4. Homeless

Date: 12/21/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court



Mayor of the City of Lometa

