

# COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Los Fresnos Municipal Court

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 **Los Fresnos Municipal Court** will implement the following protective measures:

## General

1. The Los Fresnos Municipal Court 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. The Los Fresnos Municipal Court 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. Los Fresnos Municipal Court will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020

## Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judge and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: As recommended by the CDC and the Office of Court Administration
3. Judge 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. Judge and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: Janitorial staff will be present during court to sanitize and disinfect door handles, chairs, tables, pens all surfaces that people make contact with.

## Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Beginning in June Municipal Court will be every Wednesday from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and every Friday by appointment only until further notice. Pre-Trials, Judge and Jury Trials will begin on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. when allowed by proper authorities.

## **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 one of the following options: 1. Meet on Fridays by appointment 2. Via Zoom .

## **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. Only the defendant and legal representation are allowed in the court building. Children will not be allowed.
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 will be adjusted for social distancing.
4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
5. The courtroom has been set up to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.

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6. 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, outside of 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 in the court building.

## **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the Bailiff or his Designee 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 sick, or has been tested for COVID-19 or 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, the Bailiff or his 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 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 mask, gloves, safety glasses and hand sanitizer .

### Face Coverings

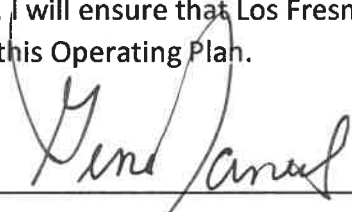
1. Individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.
3. Individuals who will be required 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 continuously while court is in session.
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 conferred with Los Fresnos Municipal Court Personnel regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority, County Judge and Mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that Los Fresnos Municipal Court Personnel conduct proceedings consistent with this Operating Plan.

Date: 5/27/2020



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Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

Judge Gene Daniels