

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Pearland Municipal City 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 Pearland 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 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 1, 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: there will be a court security person (with mask and latex gloves) who will use an infrared touchless thermometer to check the temperature of all staff coming into court and if anyone has 100 degree or more temperature they will be denied.
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 certain court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: (1) there will be a court security person (with mask and latex gloves) who will use an infrared touchless thermometer to check the temperature of all persons coming into court building and courtroom (including judge and staff) and if anyone has 100 degree or more temperature they will be denied entrance and their case re-set; (2) all persons shall wear cloth or fabric face masks or bandanas (or a cloth) that covers their mouth and nose; (3) there will be adequate spacing, including social distancing of a minimum of 6 feet that will be enforced in the court lobby and courtroom; and (4) common areas like the countertops and table tops and doorknobs will be sanitized with Clorox or some other disinfectant that kills viruses and bacteria

Scheduling

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

Remote virtual hearings or resets when necessary.

Dockets for 6-1-2020 (OCA following social distancing guidelines)

- Monday – 9:00am Show Cause (**Remote Hearing**)(50max)
1:30pm Pro Se Pre Trial (**Remote Hearing**) (50max)
3:00 pm Juvenile docket (**Remote hearing**) (25 max)
- Tuesday- 9:00am IA (**Remote Hearing**) (150max) (FTA's given IR reset)
1:30 pm Bond Forfeit./prop.hearing (Remote) 2:00 pm Bench/ Nuisance Abate. (**Remote**)
3:00 Expunction hearings. (**Remote**)
- Wednesday- 9:00am IA (**Remote Hearing**) (150max) (FTA's given IR reset)
1:30 pm Att. Pre trial (**Remote Hearing**) (25 max)
3:00pm Att. Pre trial (**Remote Hearing**) (25 max)
- Thursday- 9:00am (**Remote Hearing**) Misc. (50 max) 1:30 pm walk-in by appointment only (10 max)
- Friday- 9:00am IR in person with masks (30 max) using 2 separate courtrooms to allow distance
1:30pm FTP (**Remote Hearing**) (50 max)

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 remote virtual hearings or resets.

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. 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.
3. 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 as per City Emergency Management director.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snackrooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

5. 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.
6. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

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 elevators on each floor, outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms as per City Emergency Management director.
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 security 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 security 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. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including mask and latex gloves.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the courtroom will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be informed to bring cloth face coverings with them if they want to appear in Court.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 24 hours. The building is sanitized at night when building is empty
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms 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.

Criteria for in-person

1. Persons without internet/electronic devices (no phone/no email) with the need to speak to the prosecutor in person using safe protocols (masks/social distancing/ glass barriers/ sanitizers).
2. Disabled persons who are unable to use electronic devices/internet/ for remote hearings. Court takes great precaution and those few persons still need to be seen as long as it can be safe for them as well as court staff.

I have attempted to confer with all associate judges 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 associate judges in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 12/21/2020

Leticia Farnie
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

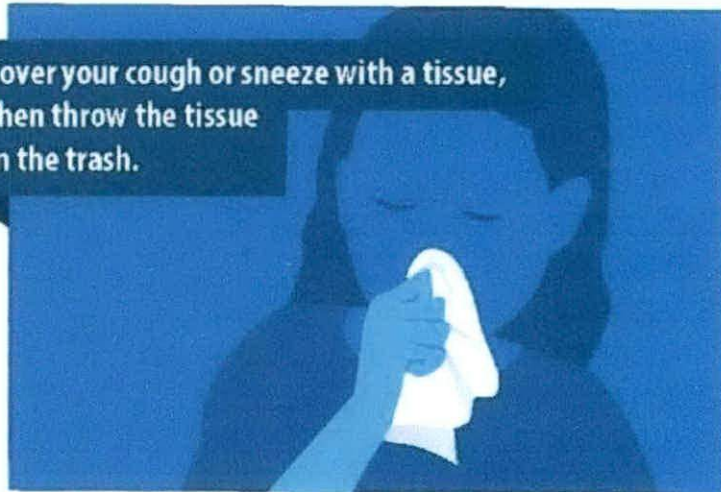
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

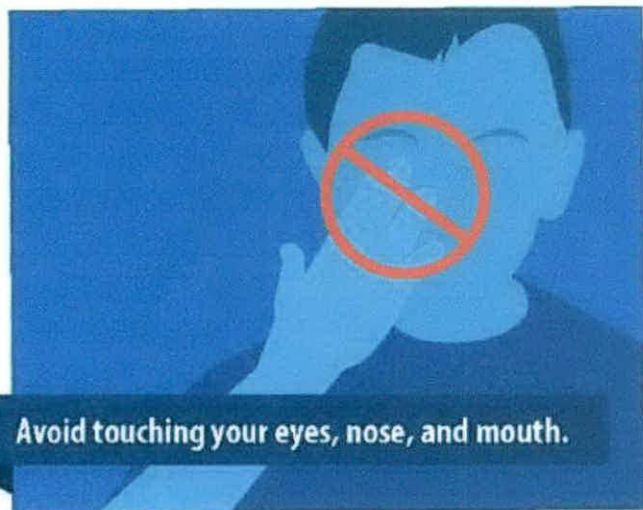
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



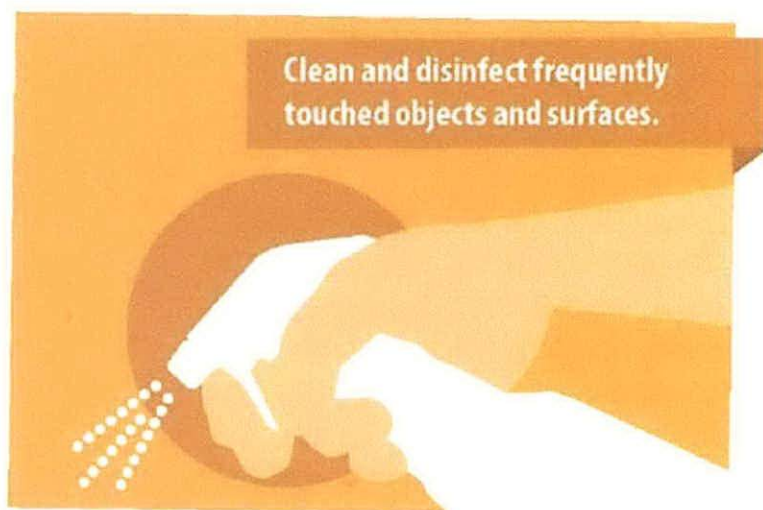
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus



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 should contact the Court 281-997-5900 for information.

COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 report mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms can include:

Fever



Cough



**Shortness
of breath**



- Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.
- Seniors and those with medical conditions are at higher risk and should pay extra attention for these symptoms.
- If you have these symptoms visit dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus for instructions on what to do.



Eleventh Administrative Judicial Region of Texas

Susan Brown

Presiding Judge

Rebecca Brite, Executive Assistant

December 23, 2020

Dear Judge Farnie,

I have completed a review of your Recertification Operating Plan for Pearland Municipal Court and find that it meets all of the conditions required by the Office of Court Administration to resume holding in person non-essential hearings, **only if a virtual hearing is impossible**, beginning January 1, 2021. I would remind you and the other judges in your jurisdiction that **per the Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals and OCA guidelines, which are in effect from June 1, 2020 until updated, that all proceedings should continue to be held remotely unless it is not possible or practicable.**

Should you need further assistance as you move forward, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for all that you do for the citizens of our great state.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Brown".

Susan Brown