

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Ralls Municipal Court, Crosby County Judiciary

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the building housing the courts, the courts of the Ralls 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 to adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than September 7, 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: 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 nausea, vomiting, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, joint 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: Face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and hand soap will be available for court staff. Hand sanitizer will be available for customers.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Each hearing will consist of no more than (10) defendants. The hearings will be scheduled every half hour, to give the staff time to sanitize in between. Defendants will not be allowed to bring other guests with them to a hearing. Juvenile defendants shall only be accompanied by no more than two parent (s) or guardian (s) and no other guests including siblings.

Accommodations will be made to comply with the Open Courts provision but at no time will the Courtroom exceed 25% normal Courtroom Capacity. Alternative options for resolving cases will be made available to citizens including but not limited to online, mail, drop box and e-mail.

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 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 scheduling a phone conference with the judge, prosecutor and clerk.

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. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.
3. 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 entrance to the building.
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 of the court building.

Screening

1. Individuals are asked to remain in their vehicle for the screening process. A member of court staff will ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish; have a cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, joint pain, muscle aches, chills, sore throat, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell; 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, a member of court staff 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 a face covering and gloves.

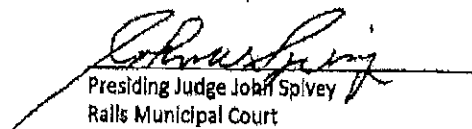
Face Coverings

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.

Cleaning

1. Court staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every hour.
2. Court 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 staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court 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.

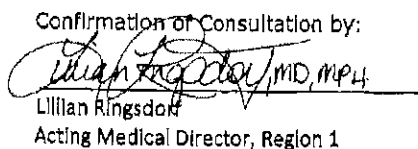

 Presiding Judge John Spivey
 Ralls Municipal Court

9-24-2020
 Date

Reviewed and approved by:

 Don Hamilton, Mayor, City of Ralls

9-18-2020
 Date

Confirmation of Consultation by:

 Lillian Ringsdorf
 Acting Medical Director, Region 1

10/9/2020
 Date

COVID-19 HEALTH SCREEN CHECK LIST

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Please answer the following questions:

1. Please mark any of the following symptoms that you may currently have:

- Fever Cough Shortness of Breath Sore Throat Headache Vomiting
 Diarrhea Loss of Taste or Smell Chills/Shaking Muscle Pain
 Sneezing/Runny Nose

2. Have you or anyone living in your home traveled anywhere in the last 14 days? If so, who and where: _____

3. Have you had close contact with anyone with a respiratory illness or a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19? Yes No

4. Have you worked in a facility or location with recognized confirmed COVID-19 cases? Yes No

**IF YOU ARE PERMITTED TO GO INTO THE BUILDING, PLEASE USE THE HAND
SANITIZER BEFORE ENTRY.**

Signature

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

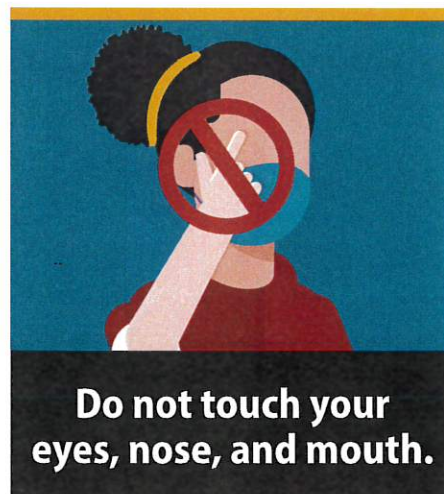
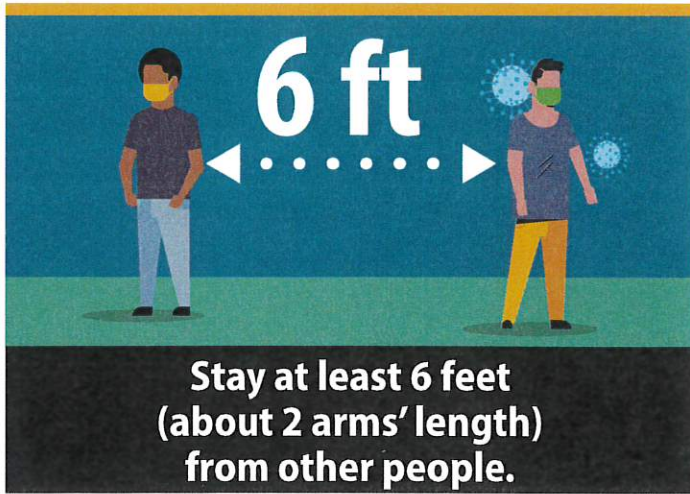
Temperature: _____

- Allowed Entry Reset Court Date
 Brought Own Facial Covering Provided Facial Mask Denied Facial Mask

Signature of Screener

Stop the Spread of Germs

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



COVID-19 COURT NOTICE

To ensure the health and safety of all persons entering the municipal court, the following protective measures have been implemented:

- 1) A face covering and social distancing is mandatory.
- 2) 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 and are urged to resolve the charge without making an appearance.
- 3) If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms as identified by the CDC, you **MUST NOT** appear in court and are urged to resolve the charge without making an appearance.
- 4) Failure to resolve the charge or appear may result in a warrant being issued.

You have many options available to you without having to appear in person, please contact us at 806-253-2558 to discuss your options. If you choose to appear on your court date, you must appear at the time specified. We are working diligently to serve you in the safest way possible.

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