

# **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Roman Forest Municipal Court, Montgomery 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 court, the court of the **City of Roman Forest** will implement the following protective measures:

## **General**

1. The judge and court personnel should 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 court should consider conducting proceedings remotely when reasonable.
3. The presiding judge of the municipal court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and mayor, adjusting 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. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: daily temperature monitoring, self-reporting.
2. 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.
3. Judge and court staff will be provided face coverings, and are encouraged to practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Judge and court staff are encouraged to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in their courtroom and offices.
5. Protective Measures: follow building occupancy requirements and install sneeze/cough shields between court officers and the public.

## **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:  
Block scheduling dockets to reduce the number of people in the building at one time.

## **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. The judge should 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 hereto as Exhibit "A").
3. Any hearing in which a member of the vulnerable population is scheduled to appear in-person should make accommodations for such person that could include limiting the appearance at a time when no other matters are being heard in order to minimize the number of people in the vicinity of such person, providing such person with a face mask, tissue, access to hand sanitizer, etc.

### **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 public restroom has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity has been posted on each restroom door.

### *Gallery*

3. 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.
4. The gallery of the courtroom has been arranged to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.

### *Well*

5. In the courtroom, the counsel table, judge's bench, clerk, 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, outside of courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel table, on the judges' bench, and in the hallway.
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. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, he/she will be instructed to disclose to court personnel if he/she is 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 and will be directed to contact the court clerk regarding his/her situation.

2. When individuals attempt to enter the court building and discloses that he/she feels feverish, court personnel 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 and will be directed to contact the court clerk regarding his/her situation.
3. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including face masks, gloves, tissue, and hand sanitizer.

#### Face Coverings

1. 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 regularly disinfected during working hours.
2. The judge will ensure that frequently touched objects and surfaces within the courtroom are regularly disinfected during working hours of each business day.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court staff will be provided appropriate cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment, such as face masks, tissue, and hand sanitizer.

#### Other

The use of the court webpage and email will be encouraged for all persons having business before the court.

In developing the operating plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that court personnel working in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 6/8/2020



Brian Stanley  
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court  
City of Roman Forest  
Montgomery County, Texas

*Alan Anderson* 6/10/2020

## **Vulnerable Populations**

Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, heart conditions, liver disease, kidney 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.

Any individual who considers himself/herself to be a member of such vulnerable populations should contact the court clerk prior to an appearance date or hearing and identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and discuss appropriate accommodations.