

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Rose City Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of the litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judge, and other individuals entering the courtroom while court is in session, the Municipal Court of Rose City, Rose City, Texas 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. 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.
3. 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: On the day of in-person court proceedings, the judge and court staff will measure their temperatures and self-assess for COVID-19 related symptoms.
2. Judge or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.0 degree Fahrenheit, 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 courtroom and should seek medical advice.
3. Judge and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations during court hearings.
4. Protective Measures: the judge and court staff shall practice appropriate hand washing and face masks will be available to the judge and court staff.

Scheduling

1. The following steps will be provided to reduce occupancy in the court building: The parties and/or their attorney must provide a phone number when checking in with the Bailiff or Clerk and then must wait in their car or outside the courthouse until they are called by the Bailiff or Clerk to come in. We will only allow one case in the courtroom at a time and never more than ten individuals at a time.

Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who are over the age of 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. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by having the option to handle their case telephonically or being reset to a later date and time.

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.

Gallery

2. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom will be posted on the door
3. Gallery Seating has been arranged to maintain appropriate social distancing of 6 feet between chairs.

Well

4. In the courtroom, if and when there is a trial, we will arrange seating of counsel tables, witness stand, Judge's bench, and clerk, court reporter, and bailiff so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.

Hygiene

1. Hand Sanitizer dispenser, tissues, and masks will be placed at the entrance to the building.
2. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted on the doors of the building.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the bailiff or clerk 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. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including a mask and gloves.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the courtroom while court is in session will be required to wear face coverings. However, if plexiglass barriers are installed in front of a person including the judge, prosecutor, court staff and/or witness, then that person may not be required to wear face coverings.
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 24 hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.

3. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

I have conferred with the Mayor and all staff of the Rose City Municipal Court regarding this Operating Plan. I will ensure that the staff and all involved with the Rose City Municipal Court covered by this Operating Plan shall conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 05/29/2020

Susan J. Oliver

Judge Susan Oliver

Angela Beener With Permission

Rose City Municipal Court

Alan Anderson June 23, 2020