

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Sanger 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 courts of **Sanger** 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: Self-screen, wash hands frequently and thoroughly for 20 seconds, use only your phone, desk, office or other equipment, practice social distancing, don't touch your eyes, nose, mouth with unwashed hands, cover coughs or sneezes with your elbow or tissue (dispose of it immediately).
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 court staff will be required to practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: all defendants and court staff entering into the court room must wear maske or facial covering, only one person in the court lobby at a time, max occupancy of 6 in the court room including court staff, defendants are not allowed to bring any additional people with them, defendants are to use hand sanitizer prior to entering the court room, all defendants will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms by the court bailiff.

### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:  
The court will start having in-person proceedings in June, with only 6 occupants in the court room at a 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. 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 postponing the court date or if applicable remote hearing.

### **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 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, including breakrooms and snackrooms, have been closed to the public.

### ***Gallery***

4. 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.

### ***Well***

5. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and 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 entrances 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.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations on of the court building.

### **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, bailiff 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. protective equipment, including disposable masks, and gloves.

### **Face Coverings**

1. All individuals entering the court room 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 building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 4 hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms 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 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.

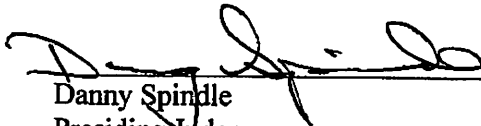
Date: 5/12/2020

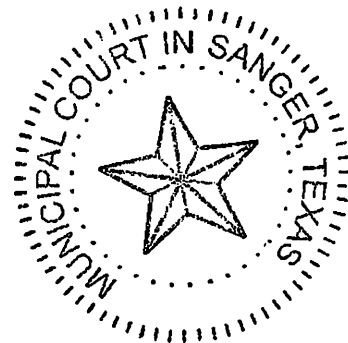
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

**JUDGE'S ORDER NO. 14  
COVID-19  
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

**IT IS ORDERED** effective immediately, 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. These individuals have the option to dispose of their citation by mail, online payment, or they may email the court for a reset or continuance on their court appearance. The attached notice will be provided to all defendants with a court date and it will be posted on the court's website. This order is effective until further notice.

**SIGNED AND ENTERED** on the 12th day of May, 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Danny Spindle  
Presiding Judge



*Attachment for Order #14*

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, all defendants set for a court hearing **MUST WEAR A MASK** or **FACIAL COVERING**. Should you not have a mask, the court will provide you with a disposable mask.

The court also asks that you **DO NOT BRING ADDITIONAL PERSONS** with you unless they are needed for physical assistance, language translation or you are a juvenile. You will be screened for COVID-19 and required to use hand sanitizer (hand sanitizer station located outside court room) prior to entering the court room.

Vulnerable individuals, are individuals that are over 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. They will have alternative options or have their court hearing postponed until later date.

You are **ENCOURAGED** to take advantage of the options for disposing your citation by mail or online. Please contact the clerk's office at 940-458-7131 for more information or visit the court's website at [www.sangertexas.org](http://www.sangertexas.org) for possible alternatives.

