



COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Selma Municipal Court, Guadalupe County 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 Municipal Court of the City of Selma 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 16, 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: During court days, an employee will be assigned to the front doors to monitor building occupancy in accordance with Section 1, Scheduling. Selma Fire Department Personnel will measure temperatures for all defendants before allowing entry to the building. Both the court employee and Fire Personnel will require the wearing of a face-covering before entering the building. All city employees will have their temperatures checked before beginning their shift. City employees and municipal court defendants who are feeling or showing symptoms listed in the next section, will not be permitted to enter the building.
3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or higher than 100.0°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, nausea and vomiting, 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 times.
5. Protective Measures: The municipal court will utilize several ¼ inch plexiglass sneeze guards (1/4" x 24" x 24") for the judge, prosecutors, and court staff. Court clerks at the front window are currently protected by a fully enclosed bulletproof glass. Court staff will post social distancing notices and affix non-skid adhesive markings on the lobby floor to assist with following social distancing measures. A frequent hand washing/sanitizing schedule will be implemented and followed before

and after all court hearings. The courtroom seating was rearranged so that all persons are sitting or standing six feet apart from each other. All city employees who have any of the above-listed symptoms will be sent home.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: The City will add a second court date for the month of June, and divide the current docket between the two dates (June 16 and June 23). Thirty-five defendants will be scheduled to arrive every hour between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. The court will add a third prosecutor to each court date to expedite the docket. To reduce the docket before court days, our staff has stepped up their efforts to work with defendants via email, mail, and fax. Walk-ins will not be allowed during the June court days.

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 court's 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 providing individual hearings.

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.

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 marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

5. 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. A hand sanitizer dispenser will be placed at the entrance of the building, inside the courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed at the judges' bench, counsel tables, and at the court counter.
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, a city employee will ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish; have a cough, problems breathing, loss of taste or smell, joint pain, and nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, 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, Selma Fire Department 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.
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 with personal protective equipment, including face coverings, gloves, and hand sanitizers.

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 building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building, so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 30 minutes.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms every 30 minutes, 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.

Other

Remote hearings via video conferencing will be encouraged for all defendants, if and when the court implements this option. The Selma Municipal Court is currently reviewing different platforms for video conferencing.

I have conferred with all the judges of this court with the courtroom in the municipal 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 this court with the courtroom in the municipal building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/22/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court