

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Bastrop Municipal Court of Record, City of Bastrop, Bastrop County**

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 Bastrop Municipal Court of Record 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 or his designee, has and will continue to maintain regular communication with Emergency Management, which incorporates 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: Must report any symptoms immediately. Office spaces are more than 6 feet apart and all CDC guidelines are being followed.
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 wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: City staff is continually cleaning and sanitizing on a rotating schedule. Sanitizer is available to the customers in a separated area from staff. All employees have gloves and masks. There is a glass divider between staff and the customer.

### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:

The courtroom has been closed and will remain closed until further notice for hearings, meetings, or other proceedings.

2. In the event of a juvenile arrest/Order of Non-Secure Custody, the Judge and the clerk will wear appropriate personal protective equipment. The juvenile will be at least 7 feet from the bench and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.
3. A large portion of our community does not have access to reliable technology in order to host virtual meetings. We will continue to handle the majority of our cases via fax, mail, email, and/or telephonically.
4. In coordination with all local officials, the Court and Police lobbies are open. Only one person at a time is allowed in the court lobby. That person has a scheduled appointment 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 electronic means.

### **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 is for single occupant only.

### ***Gallery/Well***

The courtroom will remain closed until further notice.

### **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed in the court lobby.
2. The CDC's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations in the police/ court building.

### **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, court clerks have a questionnaire for each person, asking 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. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, clerks 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. All staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be behind a glass divider and have personal protective equipment.

#### Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the police/court building will always be required to wear face coverings.

#### Cleaning

1. City facilities custodial staff are on a rotating cleaning schedule ensuring all areas are cleaned multiple times a day. We are a joint use facility with the police department.
2. City facilities custodial staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective against COVID-19.
3. City facilities custodial staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

In revising the plan, I consulted with the Court Administrator who has been in constant contact with local health authority, Office of Emergency Management and the mayor. Documentation of events is being maintained on the ICS Form 214, Activity Log, and maintained at the court and electronically at city hall. I will ensure that the judges of the court in the building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/12/2020

Revised 12/18/2020



Blas J. Coy, Jr, Presiding Judge  
Bastrop Municipal Court of Record



Desmar Walkes, M.D.  
Bastrop County Local Health Authority

**Kim Walters**

**From:** Desmar Walkes MD <desmar.walkes@co.bastrop.tx.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 28, 2020 9:07 PM  
**To:** Kim Walters  
**Subject:** RE: Municipal Court Covid Op Plan

Ms. Walters :

I have reviewed this document and it appears to follow current public health guidance.

Desmar Walkes MD  
County Health Authority | Bastrop County  
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**From:** Kim Walters <[kwalters@cityofbastrop.org](mailto:kwalters@cityofbastrop.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 21, 2020 1:34 PM  
**To:** Desmar Walkes MD <[desmar.walkes@co.bastrop.tx.us](mailto:desmar.walkes@co.bastrop.tx.us)>  
**Subject:** Municipal Court Covid Op Plan

**CAUTION: This email is from OUTSIDE Bastrop County. Links or Attachments may be dangerous.**

Good afternoon. In light of recent events, we are requesting your blessing of our Municipal Court Operating Plan for the City of Bastrop. We have to submit the most recent plan to our reginal Judge and obtain his blessing before 1 January 2021.

We have had a working plan since May 12, 2020. Our courtroom is closed and we are working strictly at our front lobby in the police building. We have maintained control and sent only 2 home for possible exposure and sent one home with an elevated temperature.

Most of our defendants have accomplished everything with their cases by mail, fax, email.

We greatly appreciate your assistance.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Kim Walters

Subject: Municipal

## Teel, Connie

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**From:** Kim Walters <kwalters@cityofbastrop.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 29, 2020 10:32 AM  
**To:** Teel, Connie  
**Subject:** Bastrop Municipal Court Plan  
**Attachments:** COVID OP PLAN 121820.pdf

We are submitting our second Operating Plan in order to continue operations in the lobby. We closed our courtroom immediately and have no intentions of opening it any time soon.

Dr Walkes is currently out of the area so she sent an email after reviewing our plan.

If the Judge needs anything more or has any questions, please let me know.

Have a great day!

Kimberly Walters, CCI  
Bastrop Municipal Court of Record  
Court Administrator  
512-332-8653