

Judge: Robert Jackson
Court Clerk: Patsy Stephenson
Deputy Clerk: Jessica Adkins

Office Phone: (409) 383-6157
(409) 383-6159

Fax: (409) 383-6163



Mailing: P.O. Box 1599 Jasper, Texas 75951

Physical: 555 South Main Street Jasper, Texas 75951 www.jasper.tx.org

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Jasper Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the building housing the Jasper Municipal Court, the Jasper Municipal Court 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 February 1, 2021.

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: The Court will require each staff member to have 8:00 AM and 1:00 PM regular temperature checks and ensure that staff members do not have any illness before participating in any in-person court proceedings.
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, and or remain in the court area of the building and should seek medical advice.

4. Judges and court staff will wear masks when deemed appropriate, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: will include wiping down cabinets, door knobs, front entrance doors, telephones, desk areas, clipboards and pens that defendants handle, court room tables and Judge's bench as well as counsel tables, where appropriate. We are in the process of having glass barriers installed around the Judge's desk, Court Clerk desk, Witness chair, and the Defendant table.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court room: No more than six staff members in the office at a time. If you do have to enter the office, maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet and reduce your presence as much as possible.
2. Defendants will not be allowed inside the Court Clerk Office. Paperwork will be distributed through our clerk window at the lobby.

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 area of the court building (a copy of which is attached).
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by rescheduling the case as appropriate, use of masking or by calling the Court at 409-383-6157 or 409-383-6159 to discuss other alternate accommodations.

Social Distancing

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the court room will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet.
2. No more than two individuals not from the same household will be permitted in an elevator. If more than one individual from the same household is in an elevator, no other individuals will be permitted in the elevator, when under our control. We have a single story building at the Municipal Court area. In the event we use the District Courtroom at the Jasper County Courthouse for a trial, we will attempt to monitor the use of elevators, but we will have no control over same since it is not our building.
3. 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 in the Police and Court building.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery is four (4) persons of each courtroom in the police and court building has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be ten (10) persons and will be monitored and enforced by court staff.

The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row. 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, when use of some is appropriate. We do not intend to have contested matters set for hearings during the next sixty (60) days. If there is no contested hearing, then tables and chairs will be stacked and not available for use to cut down on the items to sanitize.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer and Kleenex have been placed at the entrance to the Court room and Court Clerk Office as well as in the Court Room.
2. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted on the entrance doors of the building, the Court room door, Court Clerk office door.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court area in the building, appropriate staff will have the individuals complete a Coronavirus Health Questionnaire that asks 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 area in the police and court building.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the court area of the building, appropriate staff will use a walk through detector with 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 area of the building.
3. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court area of the 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 area of the building.
4. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided access to personal protective equipment, including gloves and masks if the supply is available.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court area of the building will be encouraged 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 upon request, if available.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court area of the building for over 1 hour will be provided surgical masks and be required to wear them while in the court area of the building, if the supply is available.

Cleaning

1. Court Staff will clean the common areas of the court room so that common spaces are cleaned at least every four hours.
2. Court Staff will clean the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. Court Staff has been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court Staff has 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 area of the 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 Municipal Court area of the building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

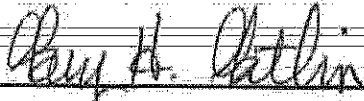


Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

DECEMBER 29, 2020

Date

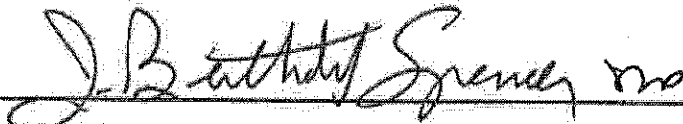
Reviewed by:



Gary Gatlin, Mayor

12/30/2020

Date



Dr. J. Berthol Spencer, Jasper-Newton Public Health Department

12/30/20

Date

**** NOTICE ****

To Vulnerable Populations

Individuals who are over the age of 65 as well as 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."

If you meet the above definition, please notify the Jasper Municipal Court at

(409) 383-6157 or (409) 383-6159

to discuss alternate accommodations.

MAXIMUM

10

PERSONS

ALLOWED IN THE COURT ROOM

PLEASE OBSERVE SOCIAL
DISTANCING AT ALL TIMES

MAXIMUM

4

PERSONS

ALLOWED IN THE COURT ROOM FOR
OBSERVING

PLEASE PRACTICE SOCIAL
DISTANCING AT ALL TIMES