

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Cedar Park 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 court, the court of **the City of Cedar Park** 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 July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **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. To minimize exposure and ensure time to sanitize workstations, limited lobby hours will temporarily be in place as follows:
  - a. Monday – Closed
  - b. Tuesday – Friday – 9am to 5pm
3. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Judges and Court staff will have their temperatures taken and will be required to answer whether they are experiencing the symptoms listed in 3a prior to entry into the facility each day.
  - a. 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. Other Protective Measures:
  - a. Wipe stations at each door, and hand sanitizer provided at each workstation.
  - b. Signage reminding staff to follow CDC guidelines will be posted in staff working areas, the courtroom, restrooms, and breakroom facilities.
  - c. Restroom modifications will include touchless faucets and paper towel dispensers. Additionally, restrooms with push bars will have arm-pulls and foot-

- d. Breakrooms will be modified to allow only 2 people at any given time, and community appliances such as microwaves, refrigerators, sinks, touch faucets, and coffee makers, will be properly wiped down after each use. A wipe-station will be placed at the door to the breakroom.
- e. Court staff will be required to wear gloves when handling physical documentation or cash transactions.
- f. Protective flaps will be added to the clerk counter 'pass-through' slots to reduce the transmission of germs.
- g. Only alternate clerk's windows will be open at any given time, to ensure proper distancing.
- h. Office supplies will be moved from closed-door cabinets to open shelving to reduce touch points when accessing those supplies.
- i. Badge swipes (not number key codes) must be used when using secured doors.

### **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.

Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by

- a. If a court hearing becomes required, it will be scheduled remotely or telephonically whenever possible. If the hearing must be held in person, the policies regarding social distancing, and the use of PPE's detailed in this policy will be strictly enforced.

### **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 defendants permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined to be five (5) and that number has been posted. The maximum capacity of

the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff. Spectators will not be permitted in the courtroom, as court sessions will be live-streamed for public access.

5. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

#### *Well*

6. 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, outside of the courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the Judges' benches, in the pretrial conference/jury area, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations throughout the court building.

#### **Screening**

1. Signage will be prominently displayed at the entrance to the courthouse, indicating that if individuals 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 they must immediately exit the building and contact the court by phone or email.
2. When individuals enter the courtroom, the Municipal Court Bailiff 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 courtroom.
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 courtroom will be provided personal protective equipment, including gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant spray or wipes.

#### **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 staff will clean all common area surfaces, including door handles and push bars, and workstation and lobby countertops every 2 hours.
2. Court staff will clean the courtroom, including properly sanitizing court benches and seating areas if there are multiple court sessions per day, when courtroom is in use.
3. Court building cleaning staff will thoroughly clean and sanitize the entire court facility including the courtroom and restrooms at the conclusion of each day.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus, are trained on proper cleaning techniques, and are provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

**Other**

1. Expanded telephone and written request options will be provided to defendants in handling their cases to minimize the need for an in-person appearance.
2. Electronic document submission by defendants will be facilitated and encouraged both at the clerk's counter and in the courtroom, to minimize transfer of physical documentation from person to person.
3. Document transfer between court staff and Judges will be done electronically whenever possible.

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.

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Joseph Oswald, Presiding Judge, Cedar Park Municipal Court

05-20-2020  
Date

**Reviewed and Approved by:**

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Williamson County & Cities Health District (Local Health Authority)

05/20/2020  
Date

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Corbin Van Arsdale, Mayor, City of Cedar Park

5-21-2020  
Date

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Billy Ray Stubblefield, Presiding Judge of the Third Administrative Judicial Region

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Date