

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan**

### **City of Cedar Hill Municipal Court, Dallas 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 courts of **City of Cedar Hill** 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, 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 – reporting.
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.
4. Employees are to disinfect workstations each morning before beginning work and at lunch period, or at a minimum every (4) four hours which includes telephones, payment terminal and keyboards.
5. Employees are to practice good hand hygiene by washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds at a time. Handwashing is also important when returning to the worksite from outside meetings, lunch and breaks.
6. Protective Measures: Plexiglass shields have been installed at the clerk's counter to protect clerks assisting the public in the lobby. Plexiglass shield will be installed on Prosecutor's desk, and Judge's Bench and a Podium with a shield has been added to the courtroom. Social distancing markers have been placed on the floor in the lobby 6 feet apart. "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" have been posted at the clerk's window and at entrance of the Court room, hand sanitizer stations are available in the Court lobby.

#### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:  
Utilizing Zoom, Email, Fax and US Mail when we can, adding additional docket times staggering appearance time in 15-minute increments limiting the number of people that will be in the lobby at any given 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. The Court 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 -attachment A).

3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by electronic hearings and or given the option to postpone court proceedings.

### **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. 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.
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.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms and snackrooms, have been closed to the public.

### *Gallery*

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

### *Well*

7. In the courtroom, the counsel and defense table have been replaced with a smaller table, witness stand, judge's bench, and clerk seating have been arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space. The prosecutor table, witness table, podium and judge's bench will have a shield of plexiglass installed of sufficient height and width to protect individuals and staff during pre-trial communications, hearings, and trials.

### **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of elevators on each floor, outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed in the courtroom.
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 (a copy is attached).

### **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. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, Bailiff 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. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including mask and disposable gloves.

### **Face Coverings**

1. All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.

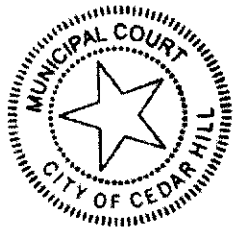
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.

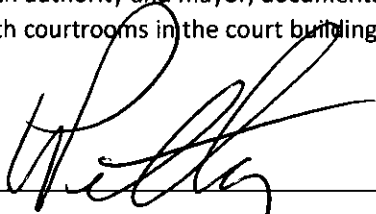
**Cleaning**

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned regularly. Court staff will supplement cleaning by using disinfectant spray in the courtroom, on surfaces, tables and chairs between dockets.
2. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

In developing the plan, I consulted with the Dallas County 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: MAY 28, 2020



  
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Presiding Judge of Cedar Municipal Court

**COVID-19 Operating Plan  
City of Cedar Hill Municipal Court, Dallas County Judiciary  
Review and Approval**

This plan has been reviewed and approved by the following:



Stephen Mason  
Mayor

06/12/2020  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Dr. Michael S. Marshall  
Local Health Authority

6/15/20  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date