

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Terry/Yoakum 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 **Terry County and Yoakum County** 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 local administrative district judge will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and county judge and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the county.
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: Self monitor each individual's temperature and physical condition and report any issues to the local administrative judge or in his absence the county judge.
3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.4°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 may be required to wear face coverings when in a public area and at all times practice social distancing and appropriate hygiene.
5. Protective Measures: follow recommendations from the local health authority

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: The courts will schedule cases to be heard at separate dates and times and to the extent possible avoid mass dockets. Pretrial procedures will be used when possible to lessen the time and persons in the courtroom. There will be time scheduled between each proceeding to allow cleaning as described below.

Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who are over age 65, children, 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 conducting zoom, hybrid zoom or other remote means which would satisfy the person's need for appearance.

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 will be 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 snack rooms, are closed to the public.

Gallery

5. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined and posted, exceptions only to be made for person of the same household as far as spacing requirements. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
6. The gallery of the courtroom will be marked prior to any entry by the public to identify appropriate social distancing and the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

7. 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, or a barrier between the persons.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at central locations in the court building for persons entering and exiting the building, elevators, courtroom, and bathrooms and all

individuals entering the court building will thoroughly wash their hands or otherwise sanitize, prior to or upon entry before proceeding to their destination.

2. Tissues have been placed at central locations to allow access when entering the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and at the entry of the court building and 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.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, they will be directed to read a sign posted with warning regarding COVID-19 symptoms and close contact with anyone infected with COVID-19 and by their entrance certify they have no such symptoms nor have they been in contact with a person infected with COVID-19 within 14 days. Court staff or security staff may 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, are subject to a temperature scan, if available, to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.4°F or who advise of such fever 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 100.4°F will not be transported to the court building.
4. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, when available, including face coverings, gloves, and a shield, if available.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building during a court proceeding may 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 may 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 24 hours.
2. Court building cleaning 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 building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.

4. Court building cleaning staff has knowledge of proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

None

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 county judge, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will make all judges of the courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan aware of the plan and encourage compliance with this Operating Plan.

Date:6/1/2020



Local Administrative District Judge