

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING THE JUDGE JULIE KOCUREK JUDICIAL AND COURTHOUSE SECURITY ACT OF 2017

PRESENTED BY TRAVIS COUNTY DISTRICT JUDGE KARIN CRUMP



JUDGE JULIE KOCUREK JUDICIAL AND COURTHOUSE SECURITY ACT OF 2017

- ▶ The Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 42 during the 85th Legislative Session.
 - ▶ Governor Abbott signed the Act into law on May 27, 2017.
 - ▶ Effective September 1, 2017.
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- ▶ Expands security incident reporting requirements for court buildings.
- ▶ Requires court security officers to receive specialized court security training in their first year.
- ▶ Allows DPS, at their discretion, to provide personal security to a state judge who has been threatened or attacked.
- ▶ Further restricts release of personal information of current and former judges, and tasks the Office of Court Administration with ensuring compliance
- ▶ Requires the Office of Court Administration to create a judicial security division to serve as a central resource for security best practices.
- ▶ Requires presiding municipal and administrative judges to create a court security committee for all courts served by that judge.

JUDGE JULIE KOCUREK JUDICIAL AND COURTHOUSE SECURITY ACT OF 2017

COURTHOUSE SECURITY COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

SECTION 74.092(A)(13)

- ▶ The local administrative district judge, or the judge's designee, who serves as presiding officer of the committee;
- ▶ A representative of the sheriff's office;
- ▶ A representative of the county commissioners court;
- ▶ One judge of each type of court in the county other than a municipal court or a municipal court of record;
- ▶ A representative of any county attorney's office, district attorney's office, or criminal district attorney's office that serves in the applicable courts; and
- ▶ Any other person the committee determines necessary to assist the committee.

- ▶ Catalog all buildings that fall under courthouse security and survey existing security measures and/or policies
- ▶ Consider forming policies and procedures subcommittee
- ▶ Become familiar with the National Center for State Courts *Steps to Best Practices for Court Building Security* available at:
<https://cdm16501.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/facilities/id/170>


FIRST STEPS

NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS

“STEPS FOR BEST PRACTICES FOR COURT BUILDING SECURITY”

1. Create lockdown and evacuation procedures for judges' chambers and courtrooms, and for all other areas of the court building.
2. Designate a floor warden on each floor to ensure proper response to emergency instructions.
3. Designate a floor warden identified and trained on each floor to respond to medical emergencies (e.g., cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and use of an automated external defibrillator (AED)), while 911 is called.
4. Designate a safe area for staff to assemble and remain in place during an emergency or negative event.
5. Designate a safe area for a command center during an emergency or negative event.
6. Develop methods for notifying judges and employees of emergencies or negative events, including the use of Communication Warning Codes
7. Develop evacuation plans that everyone in the court building has been familiarized with.

READ EXISTING WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLANS (OR CREATE NEW ONES)

- ✓ **County-wide Emergency Response and Preparedness Plan**
 - ✓ **Building Specific Emergency Action Plan**
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UNDERSTAND YOUR COUNTY'S PROTECTIVE ACTIONS GUIDE & PLANNING TOOLS

1. Best Practices report lays out steps for establishing normal and overall Court Security policies and practices, but does not generally provide guidance on emergency and/or disaster response... the primary objective of a Protective Action Plan.
2. The stated purpose of Travis County's *Protective Action Plan* is "to provide guidance concerning foreseeable emergencies to Travis County employees, contractors, and visitors."
3. The plan outlines personnel responsibilities, emergency procedures, and protective actions for reasonably anticipated emergencies.
4. Plans should include means and methods of communication during an emergency.

NEED FOR COMMUNICATION WARNING CODES FOR COURT BUILDINGS

The NCSC, as well as professional emergency responders, suggest that *communication during an emergency be clear, understandable, and simple.*

After Columbine, color codes were developed by a high school administrator in Olathe, Kansas. Since that time, color codes followed by verbal commands have been widely used in schools, in colleges and universities, in hospitals, and in federal and state courts to quickly direct employees what to do when an emergency occurs. *The decision whether to stay or leave a court building during an emergency can often be the difference between life and death.*

Realizing that clear communication and understandable, simple instructions are vital in any building emergency, courts use color codes, verbal commands, and practice drills to augment their existing evacuation procedures. Using the same color codes followed by verbal instruction in every court building will ensure that court employees can assist other building tenants, jurors, and the public how to react properly to emergencies.

RECOMMENDED COLOR CODES

Code Red– Imminent Danger

An active shooter is in the court building or there is a hostage situation.

Get into an emergency protective posture or in a safe haven per the predetermined emergency response plan (e.g., run, hide, fight).

Code Orange – Emergency: Evacuate Building

Listen to instructions from your floor warden.

Report to your assigned location away from the court building.

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Code Yellow – Emergency: Team Responding

An emergency team is responding to or is in the court building.

Wait for further instructions from officials.

Code Blue – Situational Awareness

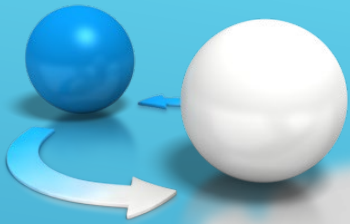
Cautionary: Be aware and prepared to react to danger.

A dangerous situation may be developing in the court building.

Code Green – Administrative/Informational

Return to normal operations.

All is well.



TRAVIS COUNTY TIMELINE – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES STUDY SUBCOMMITTEE (JANUARY 2018 – MARCH 2019)



January 31, 2018
Formation of the Policies and Procedures Study Subcommittee

- Judge Karin Crump (Chair)
- Judge Elisabeth Earle
- Judge Nicholas Chu
- Sheriff Sally Hernandez
- County Attorney David Escamilla

July 25, 2018
Review with Facilities – Kroll Report for HMS Courthouse Completion List

- Judge Karin Crump
- Roger El-Khoury (FM)
- Stephen Davis (FM)
- Peg Liedtke

October 17, 2018
Building Security Tour
Precinct #2
(JP & Constable)
Burnet Road

November 20, 2018
Building Security Tour
CJC Building

March 27, 2019
Building Security Tour
JP #5

March 12, 2019
Building Security Tour
Civil Courts
(HMS Courthouse)

Jan 24, 2019
Building Security Tour
JP#3

October 25, 2018
Building Security Tour
Precinct #4
(JP & Constable)
McKinney Falls

October 4, 2018
Building Security Tour
Gardner Betts -
South Congress

October 4, 2018
Building Security Tour
IV-D Courts – Post Road

Jan 2018	Feb 2018	Mar 2018	Apr 2018	May 2018	Jun 2018	Jul 2018	Aug 2018	Sep 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019
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March 7, 2018
Meeting – Policies and Procedures Study Committee

May 9, 2018
Meeting – Policies and Procedures Study Committee

April 19, 2018
Meeting – Policies and Procedures Study Committee

July 20, 2018
Meeting – Policies and Procedures Study Committee

October 18, 2018
Meeting – Policies and Procedures Study Committee

TRAVIS COUNTY COURT SECURITY POLICY

Under the Judge Julie Kocurek Judicial and Courthouse Security Act of 2017, the Travis County Court Security Committee (the “Security Committee”) is responsible for adopting security policies and procedures for all Travis County court buildings.

In drafting the policies and procedures, each law enforcement agency and the elected officials responsible for each courthouse should craft policies and procedures that address the unique security needs of each building. The Security Committee will review and ultimately adopt a set of policies and procedures for each Travis County court building. The Security Committee may make recommendations related to any additional security needs for each building.

COURT BUILDING	LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY
HEMAN MARION SWEATT CIVIL COURTHOUSE	TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE
BLACKWELL-THURMAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE CENTER	TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE
RICHARD SCOTT BUILDING – JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 1	CONSTABLE PRECINCT 1
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 2	CONSTABLE PRECINCT 2
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 3	CONSTABLE PRECINCT 3
RAY MARTINEZ BUILDING – JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 4	CONSTABLE PRECINCT 4
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 5	CONSTABLE PRECINCT 5 AND TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE
POST ROAD BUILDING – IV-D CHILD SUPPORT COURTROOM	TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE
GARDNER BETTS JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER	TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE

In coordination with the elected officials who oversee the court buildings, the law enforcement agency primarily responsible for security procedures for each building shall create, periodically review, and update procedures pertaining to court security.

1. The courthouse security procedures shall include the following:
 - a. Bailiff Training – Each law enforcement agency responsible for a court building shall establish law enforcement training standards consistent with the Judge Julie Kocurek Judicial and Courthouse Security Act of 2017.
 - b. Incident Reporting – Each law enforcement agency responsible for a court building shall collect, tabulate, and report to the Office of Court Administration any security incident involving court security as required under The Judge Julie Kocurek Judicial and Courthouse Security Act of 2017.

1. Consistent with the *National Center for State Courts Steps to Best Practices for Court Building Security*, the procedures should also address all of the following security concerns:
 - a. Screening – Establish a thorough screening process to ensure that all who enter any courthouse are free of prohibited weapons, contraband, or any item deemed a security threat, unless that person has been designated by written policy as someone with authority to possess the otherwise prohibited item. The screening policy should include procedures for confiscation, seizure, and removal for situations when prohibited items are detected.
 - b. Operations – Establish procedures that set forth the general duties and responsibilities of courthouse security personnel, including court bailiffs, assigned to security and alarm monitoring duties, that include:
 - 1) Alarm/camera monitoring;
 - 2) Personnel access control, including keys and badges;
 - 3) Automated door control;
 - 4) System programming;
 - 5) Security rounds;
 - 6) Courtroom inspection; and
 - 7) After-hours courthouse access.
 - c. Training Manuals – Establish training standards and requirements for all security personnel based on the individual’s duties and responsibilities.
 - d. Emergency Protocol – Establish procedures for emergency situations, including active-shooters, bomb threats, fire, or any other security threat that:
 - 1) Provide instructions for a lockdown and/or evacuation for all areas of the court building, including specific instructions for judges’ chambers and courtrooms;
 - 2) Designate a floor warden on each floor to train to respond to medical emergencies and ensure proper response to emergency situations;
 - 3) Designate a safe area for a command center during an emergency or negative event;
 - 4) Notify judges and employees of emergencies or negative events including the use of “communication warning codes;”
 - 5) Provide an evacuation plan for all court building occupants; and
 - 6) Provide the location of emergency equipment to be used by facility staff and/or emergency responders.
 - e. News Media Protocol – Establish policies and procedure for high-visibility trials that include press access inside and outside the facility.
 - f. Recording Protocol – Establish a policy for the public to be made aware of the proper and improper use of cameras, cell phones, and other recording devices within the facility and in the courtrooms specifically.

LOOKING AHEAD: CREATE A TASK FORCE FOR EACH COURT BUILDING

1. **Include all Elected Officials who have offices in the building or their designees**
2. **Include Sheriff's Department Representative**
3. **Include Facilities Representative**

Section 74.092(b) provides: A court security committee may recommend to the county commissioners court the uses of resources and expenditures of money for courthouse security, but may not direct the assignment of those resources or the expenditure of those funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS & FUNDING

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QUESTIONS?

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