

## **COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Copperas Cove 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 Copperas Cove** 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 restriction 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. Judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than October 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 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
3. Judges 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 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. Hand sanitizer will be 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. Breakrooms will be modified to allow only 2 people at any given time, and community appliances such as microwaves, refrigerators, sinks, and coffee makers will be properly wiped down after each use.
  - d. Court staff will be required to wear gloves when handling physical documentation or cash transactions.

- e. Only alternate clerk's windows will be open at any given time, to ensure proper distancing.

### **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 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 personal protective equipment (PPE) 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. Public common areas and breakrooms have been closed to the public.
3. Lobby seating areas have been marked to identify appropriate social distancing.

#### *Gallery*

4. The maximum number of defendants permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined to be (13) 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 seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

### **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building and outside of the courtroom.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the Judges' bench, and in the pretrial conference/jury area.
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 of 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 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. 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 face cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.
3. Individuals who will be required to be in the court building for over 1 hour will be provided surgical masks and required to wear them while in the court building if the supply is available.

### **Cleaning**

1. 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.
2. Court staff will thoroughly clean and sanitize the entire court facility including the courtroom and restrooms at the conclusion of each day.
3. Court 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.

**\*\*\*\*\*COVID NOTICE\*\*\*\*\***

**VULNERABLE POPULATION NOTICE**

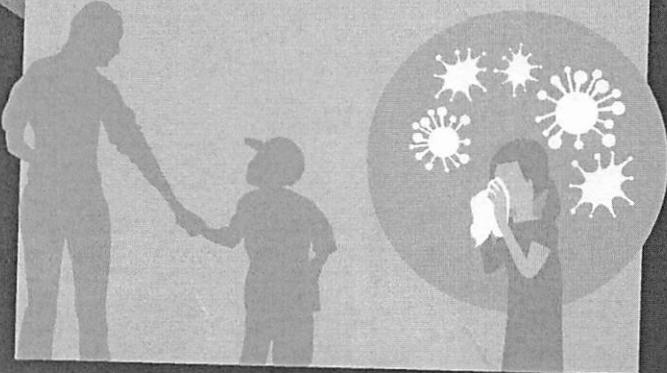
**IF YOU ARE OVER AGE 65 OR AN INDIVIDUAL WITH SERIOUS UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS, SUCH AS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, CHRONIC LUNG DISEASE, DIABETES, OBESITY, ASTHMA, AND THOSE WHOSE IMMUNE SYSTEMS ARE COMPROMISED SUCH AS BY CHEMOTHERAPY FOR CANCER OR OTHER CONDITIONS REQUIRING SUCH THERAPY, YOU ARE CONSIDERED TO BE IN THE VULNERABLE POPULATION.**

**IF YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF IN THE VULNERABLE POPULATION PLEASE CONTACT THE COURT HEARING YOUR CASE TO RECEIVE ACCOMODATIONS**

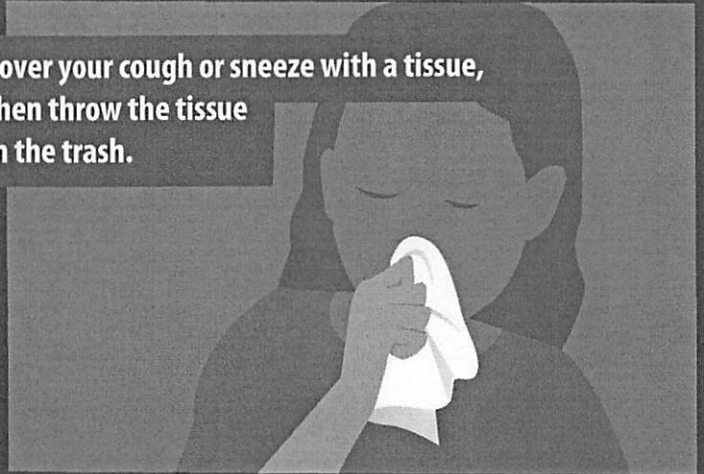
# Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



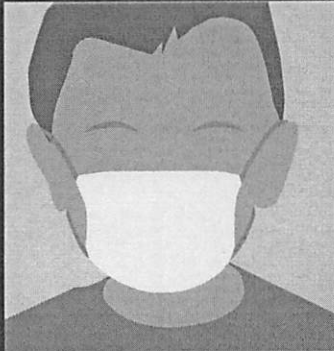
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



When in public, wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth.



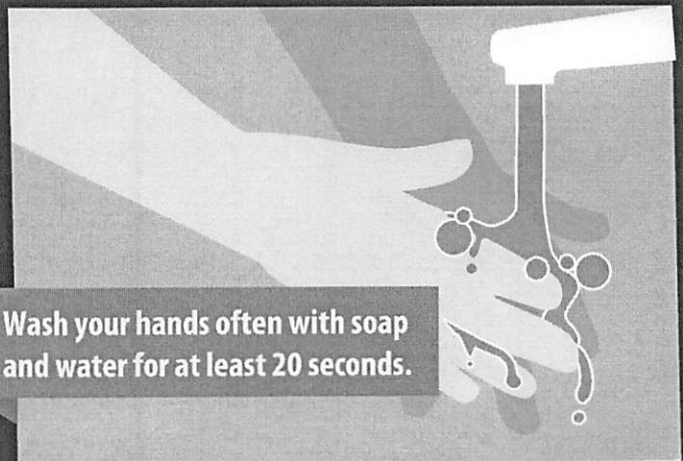
Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.




Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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.

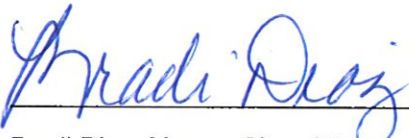
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Price, Presiding Judge, Copperas Cove Municipal Court

15 Sep '20  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Reviewed and Approved by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon K. Melville, MD, MPH – Regional Medical  
Director, PHR 7

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bradi Diaz, Mayor, City of Copperas Cove

9-15-20  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Ray Stubblefield, Presiding Judge of the Third  
Administrative Judicial Region

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



September 16, 2020

Judge Bill Price  
Presiding Judge  
Copperas Cove Municipal Court  
602 S. Main Street  
Copperas Cove, TX 76522

Dear Judge Price,

I have reviewed the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Copperas Cove City Judiciary in my role as Health Authority for Coryell County. I am in agreement with the plan and have no concerns or additional comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to consult with you on the plan.

Respectfully,

Sharon K. Melville, MD, MPH  
Texas Department of State Health Services  
Regional Medical Director, PHR 7