

# COVID-19 Operating Plan

## Fair Oaks Ranch Municipal Court

Effective August 1, 2020

Presiding Judge Kimberly S. Keller

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the Justice Center building housing the court and the **Municipal Court of Fair Oaks Ranch, Bexar County, Texas** will implement the following protective measures:

### General

1. The Presiding Judge 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. The Presiding Judge will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. The Presiding Judge will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and mayor in order to adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. The Presiding Judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than **August 1, 2020**.

### Judge and Court Staff Health

1. The judge and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: The Judge and court staff will submit to the measuring of their temperature before entering the courtroom or court offices. If any judge, court clerk, or court staff member has a temperature equal to or greater than 99.6°F, that person will not be permitted to enter the offices or courtroom and shall be sent home and should monitor their medical condition and seek the counsel and advice of their personal physician.
3. Judge 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. Judges and court staff should not come to work if they exhibit any of these symptoms or a fever equal to or greater than 99.6°F.
4. Judges and court staff are required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.

5. Protective Measures: All court staff and judges shall wear cloth, fabric, or surgical masks or bandana that completely cover their mouth and nose, practice social distancing of a minimum of 6 feet from any other person, using antimicrobial hand sprays and gels, such as Purell and Germ-X, utilize frequent hand washing, especially after handling any documents, touching any doorknobs, computer keyboards, telephones, etcetera. Staff will also ensure that their immediate work area is periodically wiped down with cleaners that contain sanitizing properties that kill viruses and bacteria, such as **Clorox**® wipes and sprays.

### Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: On court days, court appearances will be scheduled every fifteen minutes to ensure no more than **4 persons at a time** will be admitted into the courtroom, in addition to court security personnel, the judge, the prosecutor and the court clerk. All persons in the courtroom and in the lobby, waiting to be processed, shall wear a cloth, fabric covering, bandana, or surgical mask that completely covers their mouth and nose and shall maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet between any other person, inside the lobby and courtroom, as well as while inside the court building. Persons who are waiting to be admitted into the courtroom shall wait in their car or outside in the parking lot, remaining six feet apart, until called (by cell phone) to enter the building.

### Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals over 65 or 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 court's website 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 telephone, tele conference or video conference.

### 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 while inside the building or while waiting outside the building.

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.

### **Gallery**

3. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
4. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.
5. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, 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 in the court lobby.
2. Tissues have been placed in the lobby and in the courtroom.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in the court lobby.

### **Screening of all Persons Entering Court Building**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the courtroom, Court staff and/or Bailiffs 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 courtroom. Court or security staff are authorized to refuse admittance to the courtroom of anyone exhibiting the aforementioned symptoms. Individuals denied entry will be advised that the court will re-set their court date and that they can contact the court to re-set their appearance or request a hearing via tele-conference or by video-conferencing.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the courtroom, Court staff or Bailiffs will use an infrared (touchless) 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 face masks and gloves. It is highly encouraged that screening personnel wear goggles or glasses, since tear ducts are known to be a point of entry for the COVID-19 virus.

### **Face Coverings**

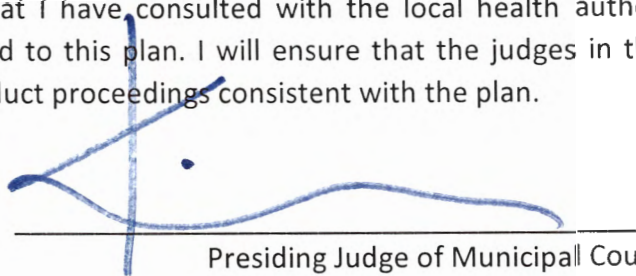
1. All individuals entering the courtroom will be required to wear face coverings at all times, which shall be either cloth or fabric covering, bandana, or surgical mask that completely covers their mouth and nose.

## Cleaning

1. On court dates, court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces, such as counter-tops are cleaned and sanitized at least once every 8 hours. On court days, court staff will try to clean the lectern where defendants stand before the judge and court doorknobs with **Clorox**<sup>®</sup> wipes and sprays or alcohol sprays between each defendant who appears.
2. On court days, court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between every trial and every evening.
3. On court days, court building cleaning staff will be provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus such as **Clorox**<sup>®</sup> wipes and sprays.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

In developing the plan, I affirm that I have consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 6/4/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court  
Honorable Kimberly S. Keller