

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Municipal Court of the Town of Refugio, Refugio 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 Town of Refugio will implement the following protective measures:

General

1. The 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 judge 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 the mayor to adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city.
4. The judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings, in the discretion of the judge of the referenced court on or after June 1, 2020.

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. 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 housing the courtroom.
2. Judge and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene practices to the extent consistent with the practicalities of in-person proceedings.

Scheduling

1. Judge and clerks will exercise reasonable efforts to schedule proceedings in a manner which will reduce courtroom occupancy.

Vulnerable Populations

1. To the extent a judge or attorney has knowledge that a participant in a proceeding is a member of the vulnerable population, the court and attorneys with such knowledge shall attempt to make a reasonable accommodation for the vulnerable person to protect that person's health, consistent with that person's due process rights and the rights of the parties to the proceedings. The court and court staff have no independent obligation to determine whether a person is a member of the "vulnerable population".

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. Social Distancing of at least 6 feet will be required in common areas, courtroom, and jury room.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building and outside of the courtroom to the extent of availability.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, court building security 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, court building security 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 court building, following 2 consecutive temperature measurements by infrared thermometer.

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 99.6°F will not be transported to the court building.
4. Court building security will be provided face masks, gloves and hand sanitizer for their use while on duty, to the extent of availability.

Face Coverings

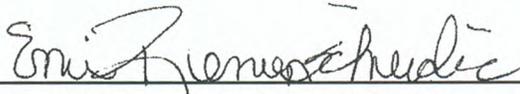
1. All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them.

Cleaning

1. The judge shall request that the Municipal government authority which owns the court building to instruct its maintenance and cleaning staff to clean the courtroom and common areas of the court building at the beginning of each day and at the conclusion of the last hearing in the courtroom daily, in addition to normal cleaning procedures.

In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and the mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. These procedures are not inconsistent with the recommendations of the public health authority of the said municipality.

Date: 12/14/2020



Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

Date: 12/14/2020



Mayor Wanda Dukes