



FILED IN DISTRICT COURT
COOKE COUNTY, TEXAS

2020 JUN -3 PM 3:22

Eighth Administrative Judicial Region

FILED BY MARCI A GILBERT

DAVID L. EVANS
Presiding Judge
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Counties

- ARCHER
- CLAY
- COOKE
- DENTON
- EASTLAND
- ERATH
- HOOD
- JACK
- JOHNSON
- MONTAGUE
- PALO PINTO
- PARKER
- SOMERVELL
- STEPHENS
- TARRANT
- WICHITA
- WISE
- YOUNG

Office of Presiding Judge

Tom Vandergriff Civil Courts Building
100 N. Calhoun St
Fort Worth, Texas 76196-1148

May 28, 2020

Judge Janelle Haverkamp
Cooke County Local Administrative District Judge
235th District Court
101 S. Dixon Street
Gainesville, Tx. 76240

Dear Judge Haverkamp,

Re: Operating Plan for Cooke County, Texas

I have completed a review of your Operating Plan and find that it meets the requirements¹ for holding in-person, non-essential hearings. Notwithstanding the approval of the Operating Plan, the orders² of the Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals and the guidance of OCA³, which are in effect until modified, require judges to use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceeding remotely. Thus, all proceedings should occur remotely unless a necessary participant is unable to successfully participate in remote hearings for reasons beyond the judges control.

Should you need further assistance as you re-open your courtrooms, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for all your hard work.

Sincerely,

David L. Evans

¹ See Guidance For All Court Proceeding During Covid-19 Pandemic (For Proceeding on or after June 1, 2020).

² See Seventeenth Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster, Misc. Docket No. 20-9071, May 27, 2020.

³ *Supra. Note 1.*

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Cooke County Judiciary

Non-Jury Proceedings

JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
COOKE COUNTY, TEXAS

2020 JUN -3 PM 3: 22

CLERK-MARCI A GILBERT

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 Cooke 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: Judges and Court Staff will be screened upon entry into the Court building.
3. Judges 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.
4. Judges and court staff will wear face coverings as directed by the Judge of each respective Court. Judges and Court Staff are encouraged to wear face coverings. Face coverings will be provided. Judges and Court Staff will practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
The Courts will coordinate scheduling to avoid crowds and allow for social distancing in the common areas.

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 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 utilizing video remote appearances through Zoom or by being appropriately isolated in the courtroom.

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 has been 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 snackrooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

5. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
6. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in 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.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, outside of elevators on each floor, outside of each courtroom, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' benches, and in the hallways.

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. There will be one public entry into each court building. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the screener 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, the screener will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°F 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 99.6°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, including masks and gloves.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will be encouraged 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 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 encouraged to wear them while in the court building if the supply is available.

Cleaning

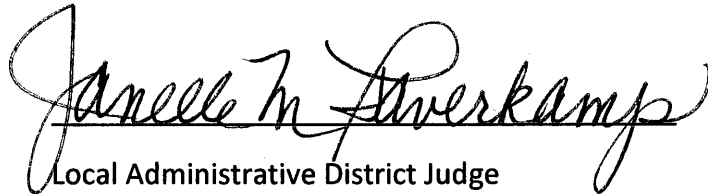
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every two hours.
2. Each Court's Staff will coordinate with the Court building cleaning staff to ensure that the courtrooms will be cleaned between every hearing, between morning 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 and will provide each Court Staff with cleaning supplies effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment and will train each Court Staff on proper cleaning techniques. Each Court Staff will be provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

Protective glass partitions have been installed in the offices in the court buildings to which the majority of the public may have a need to access.

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 ensure that the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court buildings covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/21/2020


Local Administrative District Judge

Notice to 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 by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable populations.
2. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated, if it all possible, by utilizing video remote appearances through Zoom, or by being appropriately isolated in the courtroom.
3. If you are included in the vulnerable population, as described above, please contact the Court Coordinator for the court in which you are scheduled to appear.

1. 235th District Court: Send to tess.payeur@co.cooke.tx.us or call 940-668-5401
2. Cooke County Court at Law: Send to brandy.hammond@co.cooke.tx.us or call 940-668-5470
3. Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1: Send to justice1@co.cooke.tx.us or call 940-668-5463
4. Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2: Send to vvjp4@yahoo.com or call 940-668-5510
5. Child Protection Court: Send to amy.patterson@txcourts.gov or call 940-668-5502
6. Child Support Court: Send to gloria.steimmel@co.wichita.tx.us or call 940-766-8110



Jason Brinkley
Cooke County Judge

101 South Dixon Street
Gainesville, Texas 76240

Phone: (940)668-5435
Fax: (940)668-5440

May 26, 2020

Office of Court Administration & Administrative Judge Evans,

Per the Office of Court Administration requirements, as County Judge, I have been consulted by Judge Haverkamp on the COVID-19 Operating Plan for Cooke County Judiciary, for non-jury proceedings.

In formulating the Operating Plan for Cooke County, Judge Haverkamp thoroughly conferred with all judges and prosecutors' offices in Cooke County, as well as Cooke County Commissioners Court and our local health authority. This plan was formulated after much consultation. I am in agreement with the requirements set forth by Judge Haverkamp. I strongly encourage your approval as well. As our facilities are mixed use facilities, housing both judicial and non-judicial activities, this plan is in the best interest of all persons using said facilities.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jason Brinkley
County Judge

Douglas Lewis, MD
Medical Director,
Cooke County Emergency Medical System
301 W Church St
Gainesville, TX 76240

May 27, 2020

Janelle M. Haverkamp
235th Judicial District
Cooke County Court House,
101 S Dixon St
Gainesville, TX 76240

Dear Judge Haverkamp,

As required by the State of Texas for resumption of in person court appearances, I have reviewed your proposed protocols and I recommend their use. I believe these protocols reasonably minimize risk of transmission of COVID-19 coronavirus to everyone in attendance during court proceedings.

Please contact me if further information or clarification is required.

Sincerely yours,



Douglas Lewis, MD

Local Health Authority, Cooke County, Texas

1234 MAIN STREET ANYTOWN. STATE ZIP