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# COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of El Paso Municipal Court 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 courts, the courts of **the El Paso Municipal Court** 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.

## Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: temperatures are taken upon arrival; hand sanitizers have been installed.
2. 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.
3. Protective Measures: Plexiglass has been installed between the Judge's and Deputy's bench. Plexiglass has also been installed between judge/deputy bench and public in every courtroom.
4. Protective Measures: due to close working conditions, face coverings are required to be worn by staff and security personnel especially in the lobby areas; limit walking around the facility; lunch at work station; work stations and counter area are sanitized

## 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 1-2 feet.
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. *Housekeeping maintains a cleaning log in each restroom.*
3. 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 1-2 feet between each space.

## Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the lobby entrances to the building, outside of elevators, inside and outside of each courtroom, at the customer service lines, and outside of bathrooms.
2. Sanitizing products are provided to staff to sanitize their own work stations as needed throughout the day.

## Screening

1. Upon entering the court building, security guards and 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 court building.
2. Upon entering the court building, security guards and bailiffs will use the metal detector machine's built in thermometer or a manual 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. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment: face masks.

## Face Coverings

1. In observance of CDC guideline, face coverings will not be required; although it is strongly recommended and encouraged that individuals wear face coverings in the lobby of the court buildings or when in the area of another person not from the same household.
2. **An individual Judge may still mandate the use of face coverings in the courtroom.**
3. Individuals will be encouraged to bring face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask can be provided
4. All jurors are encouraged to wear face coverings.

## Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every hour.
2. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.
3. Fogging is performed on a weekly basis. All courtrooms as well as work areas are fogged for deep sanitizing.

## Other

1. Plexiglass dividers installed at service counter between customers and between court staff.
2. Bullet proof glass is already installed at each location.

3. Night drops have been installed at all locations, additional email groups have been posted on the Court's website to allow for public contact with court staff and submission of documents; Alivechat has been in operation since 2018;
4. Locations are closed to the public when necessary- widespread notice is issued. Example: from Oct 26, 2020 – Dec 14 all locations were closed to the public

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.

The revisions to the face covering mandate will be effective March 15, 2022

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Daniel Robledo, Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

