

COVID-19 Operating Plan for Nolanville Municipal Court

Presiding Judge Kevin R. Madison

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the J. W. Simms Building which houses the court and courtroom, Presiding Judge Kevin Madison and the **Municipal Court of Record of Nolanville, Bell County, Texas** will implement the following protective measures, which have been drafted after having consulted with Bell County's epidemiologist and health official, Gene Mikeska, and Nolanville Mayor Andy Williams.

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 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. The presiding judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than **JULY 1, 2020, however the decision to re-open the court for in-person proceedings will be made after the Presiding Judge reviews pandemic trends and health reports from local health officials and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).**

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: No more than 8 persons at a time will be admitted into the courtroom, in addition to court security personnel, the judge, and the court clerk. All persons in the courtroom and in the lobby, waiting to be processed, shall wear 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 courtroom and while in the court building, such as the lobby.

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 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.
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 snack rooms, 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.
7. 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 at the entrances to the building, outside of the 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 hallway.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations in the court building.

Screening of all Persons Entering Court Building

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, 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 court building and 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 hearing via tele-conference or via video-conferencing.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, Court staff or Bailiffs 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.
3. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including face masks and gloves. It is highly encouraged that screening personnel also wear goggles or glasses, since tear ducts are known to be a point of entry for the COVID-19 virus.

Face Coverings

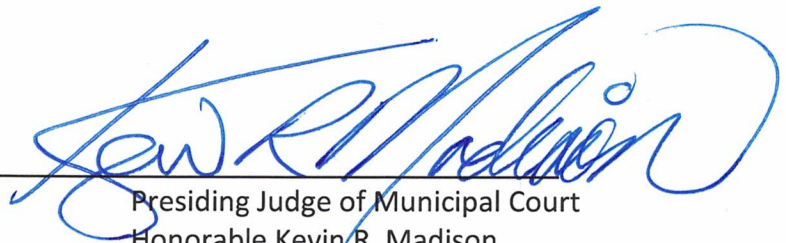
1. All individuals entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times, which shall be either cloth or fabric covering, bandana, or surgical mask that completely covers their mouth and nose.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if 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 required 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, such as counter-tops are cleaned and sanitized at least once every 8 hours, during times that the Court is open to the public.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom, restrooms, lobby, waiting room, chairs, and tables after each court session (normally ½ day/month).
3. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus such as **Clorox**® wipes and sprays.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

In developing this plan, I 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 Kevin R. Madison
Nolanville Municipal Court of Record

POSTED ON EXTERIOR DOORS OF COURTHOUSE
AND
POSTED ON COURT WEBSITE



COVID-19 NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS

PLEASE DO NOT APPEAR IN COURT IF YOU ARE SICK

PLEASE CALL THE NUMBER BELOW THE DAY BEFORE TO RESCHEDULE.

NOLANVILLE COURT TELEPHONE NUMBER: (254) 698-6093

NOTICE TO VULNERABLE POPULATION INDIVIDUALS

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.

Except for specific legal requirements, members of vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by being given an opportunity to appear by teleconference or videoconferencing, to submit necessary information in written form, or by rescheduling of the in-person hearing until a time after the COVID-19 crisis has diminished.

Contact the Court for further information or if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Judge Kevin R. Madison".

Judge Kevin R. Madison
Presiding Judge

Kevin Madison

To: Andy Williams; Joan Hinshaw; Butch Reis; James Bilberry; David Williams
Cc: Kara Escajeda; Crystal Briggs
Subject: 06 04 2020 RE: Draft of COVID-19 Court Operating Plan for Nolanville Municipal Court of Record

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

It was a pleasure discussing my COVID-19 Court Operating Plan with you at the virtual City Council meeting tonight. Based on your approval I am going to submit my plan to Judge Stubblefield.

Warm Regards,
Judge Madison
Presiding Judge
Nolanville Municipal Court

From: Kevin Madison <kevin@kevinmadison.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 23, 2020 11:00 AM
To: Andy Williams <awilliams@nolanvilletx.gov>
Cc: Kara Escajeda <kescajeda@nolanvilletx.gov>; Crystal Briggs <cbriggs@nolanvilletx.gov>; Kevin Madison <kevin@kevinmadison.com>
Subject: Draft of COVID-19 Court Operating Plan for Nolanville Municipal Court of Record

Dear Mayor Williams,

After consulting with Gene Mikeska, epidemiologist for Bell County, I have finalized my draft for our court's COVID-19 Court Operating Plan. I am required to prepare and submit a COVID-19 Court Operating Plan. I do not see us re-opening for in-person proceedings until July or August. Of course, this depends in large part how this pandemic spreads or slows down in the next few weeks after the state and county governments are allowing businesses to re-open.

I am required, by the Texas Supreme Court and Office of Court Administration (OCA), to prepare an operating plan, based off a template that the OCA sent to all Texas judges. I am also required, as are all Texas judges, to "consult" with our local county health officials and our mayor about our operating plan. I have had several tele-conferences with Gene Mikeska, our county Health Official. I submitted my plan to him and he had a couple of suggested changes, which I made and incorporated into this attached order. Once you give me the "green light" on the plan, I can submit it to Williamson County District Court Judge Billy Ray Stubblefield, our Regional Administrative Presiding Judge, for his approval.

I am now submitting my proposed draft to you, Mayor, as I am required to "consult" with you, as our Mayor, about the plan. I have been working on this and polishing it for several weeks now, after consulting with 3 other multi-county epidemiology health experts. Again, I don't anticipate the court fully re-opening for "in person" hearings until July or August. I have already initiated procedures and standing orders for Misha and our prosecutor, Erin Higginbotham, so that we can contact defendants with pending cases and try to whittle down our pending case load. Please let me know your thoughts on this proposed re-opening plan, after you have had an opportunity to review it and let me know if you have any questions. I am definitely open for any comments, corrections, or suggestions!

Best Regards,
Judge Madison

Kevin Madison

To: Gene Mikeska
Cc: Crystal Briggs; Kara Escajeda; Attorney Kevin R Madison
Subject: RE: COVID-19 Court Operating Plan for Nolanville Municipal Court

Dear Mr. Mikeska,

Thank you so much for consulting with me about the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Municipal Court of Nolanville. I appreciate your comments and suggestions. We deeply appreciate all of your assistance to our city and to Bell County!

Judge Madison

From: Kevin Madison <kevin@kevinmadison.com> **Sent:** Friday, May 8, 2020 12:26 PM
To: Gene Mikeska GMikeska@bellcountyhealth.org **Cc:** Crystal Briggs <cbriggs@nolanvilletx.gov>; Kara Escajeda <kescajeda@nolanvilletx.gov>
Subject: COVID-19 Court Operating Plan for Nolanville Municipal Court

Dear Mr. Mikeska,

Thank you for your presentation last night at the city council meeting. You gave us some very valuable information. Bell County Health Department is lucky to have you. I am the newly appointed Presiding Judge for the City of Nolanville. Pursuant to the Texas Supreme Court and Office of Court Administration, I am required to submit a COVID-19 Court Operating Plan for when we anticipate re-opening the court for limited "in-person" proceedings, which I do not anticipate until after August 1. Could I impose on you to review my draft of the COVID-19 Court Operating Plan for Nolanville Municipal Court? I have attached the first draft of my COVID-19 Court Operating Plan, if you could take just 15 minutes of your time to look it over. Any comments or suggestions would be greatly appreciated!

Thank you,
Judge Kevin Madison
Cell: (512) 784-5237