COVID-19 Operating Plan for the City of Duncanville Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the court, the Duncanville 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.

2. All Judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely as necessary.

3. The presiding judge of the Duncanville Municipal Court will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and the Mayor and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the city and/or county.

4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than September 1, 2020.

Judges and Court Staff Health

1. Judges and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely may telework when possible, consistent with the requirements of the City of Duncanville and/or the Court.

2. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: All staff will self-monitor and will immediately report any symptoms or exposure to his or her supervisor.

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 recent 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 are encouraged to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times. If required by Orders, Rules, Regulations, Statutes, and/or Ordinance of State, County, and/or City of Duncanville authorities, Judges and court staff may be required to wear face coverings.

5. Protective Measures: Frequent hand washing is encouraged and hand sanitizers are strategically located throughout the workplace.

Scheduling

In order to reduce occupancy in the court:

1. The Duncanville Municipal Court shall continue to utilize online and telephonic abilities for handling court dockets remotely.

2. Any scheduled in-person court dockets shall be conducted in a manner consistent with social distancing and hygiene guidelines.

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 court's website and in conspicuous locations at the entrance to the courtroom in English and Spanish. *See* Attached Exhibit A.

3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by resetting their hearing until after the pandemic has subsided or by conducting their hearing online or telephonically.

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. Each restroom will be evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity will be posted on each restroom door.

3. Public common areas, including break rooms and snack rooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery

4. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the Duncanville Municipal Court courtroom will be determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.

5. The gallery of the courtroom will be marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

6. In the courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and 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 and/or will have plexi-glass protective shields put in place at least at the table of the prosecutor and of the defendant.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed in the lobby at the entrance to the building where the Court conducts dockets, hearings, and trials and will be placed in the courtroom.

2. Tissues will be placed inside the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, and on the judges' benches.

3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" in English and Spanish will be posted in the lobby at the entrance to the courtroom. *See* Attached Exhibit B.

Screening

1. Individuals who are seeking to enter the courtroom for an in-person court proceeding will be greeted near the entrance of the building by the City Marshall and/or designee for check-in. The individual's phone information will be taken and the individual will be asked to return to the individual's vehicle until the individual is called by phone or via an app to enter the courtroom to handle the individual's proceeding. If the individual is unable to wait in the individual's vehicle, the individual will be asked to remain in the lobby or will be allowed to proceed to the courtroom and be seated in a manner consistent with social distancing guidelines.

2. Before individuals attempt to enter the courtroom for an in-person court proceeding, the City Marshall, or designee, 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 courtroom.

3. When individuals attempt to enter the courtroom for an in-person court proceeding, the City Marshall 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 courtroom.

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 facial coverings and gloves.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the courtroom will be encouraged to wear face coverings at all times. If required by Orders, Rules, Regulations, Statutes, and/or Ordinance of State, County, and/or City of Duncanville authorities, individuals entering the courtroom may be required to wear face coverings.

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.

Cleaning

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every six hours.

2. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.

3. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

Other

Temporary barriers will be placed at the prosecutor and defense tables and at the bench during any hearings.

A temporary barrier will be placed between the prosecutor and any defendant during any proceedings where the prosecutor and defendant need to communicate in person.

Permanent barriers have been placed between court staff and individuals at the windows to the court offices.

I have conferred with all judges of the Duncanville Municipal Court regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and mayor, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of the Duncanville Municipal Court will conduct proceedings consistent with the Plan.

Date: August 18, 2020

JBRizo

JBRizo
Presiding Judge, Duncanville Municipal Court

OPTIONS FOR VULNERABLE INDIVIDIAULS TO ADDRESS CASES WITHOUT APPEARING IN PERSON

"Vulnerable Individuals" include individuals who are over age 65, 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.

If you believe you are a Vulnerable Individual, and do not wish to appear in person, you may contact the Court to request the ability to make an online or telephonic payment or you may make a payment by dropping off the payment in the Drop Box located in the parking lot of City Hall. Also, if you do not wish to make an appearance in person for a scheduled hearing you may request an online or telephonic hearing regarding your case.

Special accomodations for Vulnerable Individuals requiring trials will be handled on a case by case basis.

You may contact the Court at (972) 780-5055 or by email at court@duncanville.com.

OPCIONES PARA PERSONAS VULNERABLES PARA ABORDAR CASOS SIN APARECER EN PERSONA

Las "Personas Vulnerables" incluyen personas mayores de 65 años, personas con afecciones de salud subyacentes graves, como presión arterial alta, enfermedad pulmonar crónica, diabetes, obesidad, asma y aquellos cuyos sistemas inmunes están comprometidos, como la quimioterapia para el cáncer u otros condiciones que requieren tal terapia.

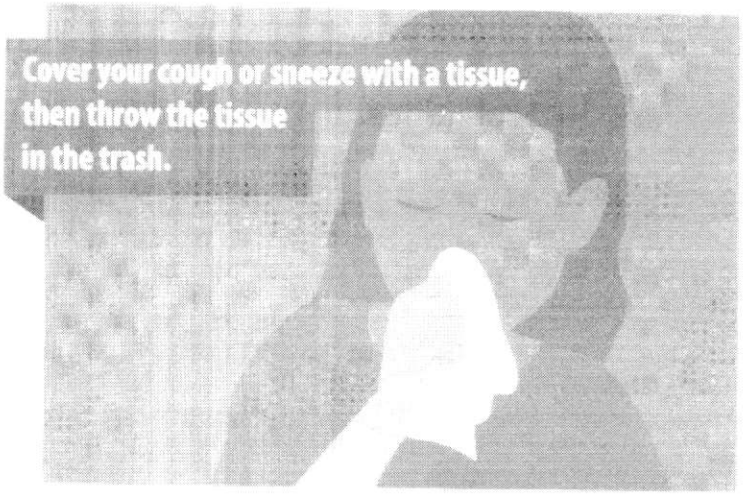
Si cree que es un individuo vulnerable y no desea comparecer en persona, puede comunicarse con el Tribunal para solicitar la posibilidad de realizar un pago en línea o por teléfono o puede realizar un pago al dejar el pago en el buzón ubicado en el estacionamiento del ayuntamiento. Además, si no desea comparecer en persona para una audiencia programada, puede solicitar una audiencia en línea o telefónica con respecto a su caso.

Las adaptaciones especiales para personas vulnerables que requieren juicios se manejarán caso por caso.

Puede comunicarse con el Tribunal al (972) 780-5055 o por correo electrónico a court@duncanville.com.

COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS



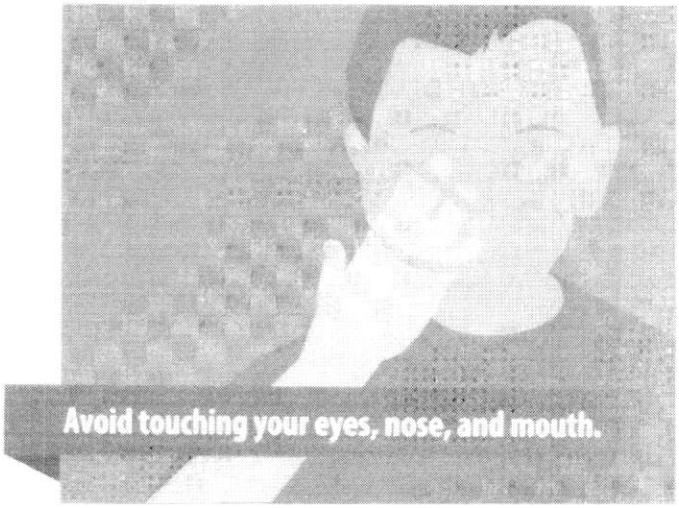


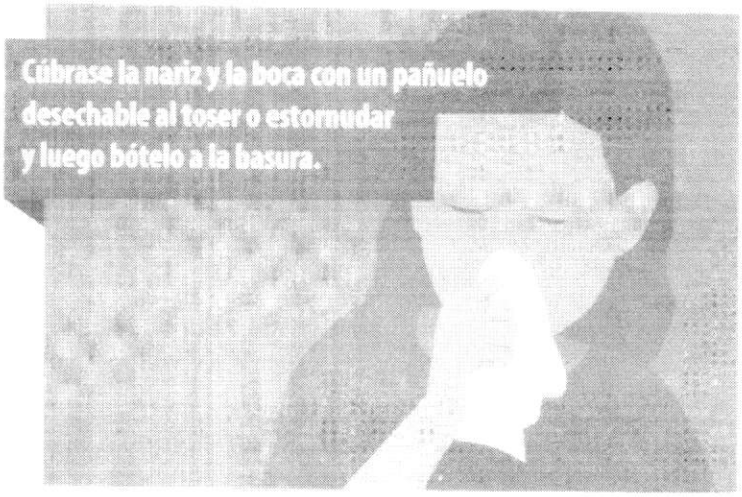
Exhibit B

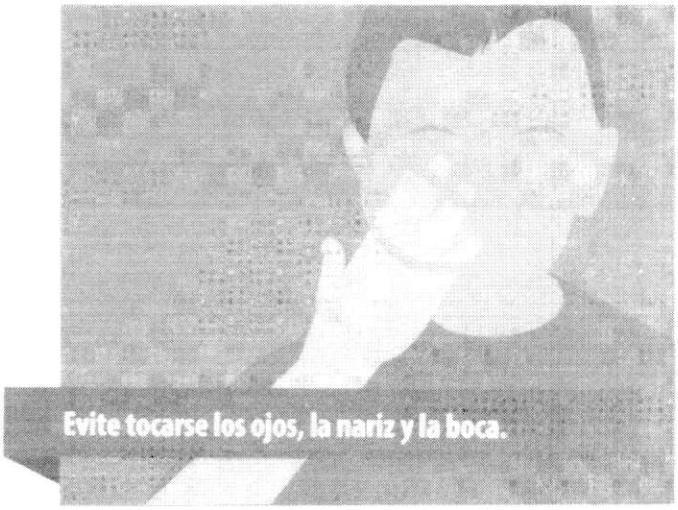
COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

DETENGA LA PROPAGACIÓN DE MICROBIOS

Evite el contacto cercano con las personas enfermas.

Cúbrase la nariz y la boca con un pañuelo desechable al toser o estornudar y luego bótelo a la basura.





Evite tocarse los ojos, la nariz y la boca.