

# Jefferson County



## Courthouse Re-opening Plan

# COVID-19 Operating Plan for Jefferson County Courthouse Re-Opening

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, staff, judges, county employees, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, the courthouse will implement the following protective measures:

## General

1. All judges and departments will comply with the Emergency Orders issued by the governor 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 and meetings remotely.
3. The Office of Emergency Management will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and adjust this operating plan as necessary considering conditions in the community.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1.
5. All departments within the main courthouse and remote annexes will comply with this plan.

## Judges and All Departments

1. Judges and Departments who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will telework when possible.
2. All courthouse personnel who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 99.9°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. Judges and department staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations when in public areas of the courthouse.

## 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. If courthouse personnel may be vulnerable, please report to your department head. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated in the discretion of the judge.

### **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. With the exception of the courthouse café.

### ***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, 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. Wipes will be placed near the door of all courtrooms.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" will be posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

### **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, screening personnel 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. Starting at 7:00 am county employees will enter through the "Old Courthouse" side where they will be screened. Starting at 8:00 am the public will enter through the "New Courthouse" side where they will be screened and go through security.
3. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, screening personnel will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 99.9°F will be refused admittance to the court building.
4. To the greatest extent possible inmates shall have hearings conducted remotely.
5. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including; mask and gloves.

### **Face Coverings**

1. All public entering the court building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring a mask with them, but if the individual does not have a mask, a disposable face mask will be provided.

### **Cleaning**

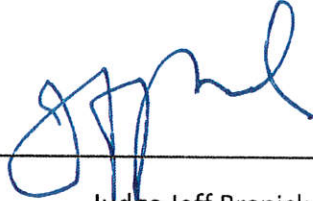
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 4 hours.
2. Judges will ensure cleaning of the courtrooms between every hearing, between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

### **Other**

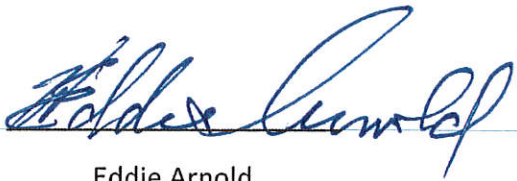
1. While under a Disaster Declaration, Emergency Management will issue masks and wipes to courthouse personnel. When no longer under a Disaster Declaration departments will purchase their own PPE and sanitary supplies.

To be effective at 6:00 a.m. June 1, 2020

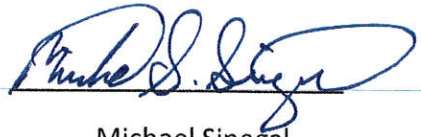
Signed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.



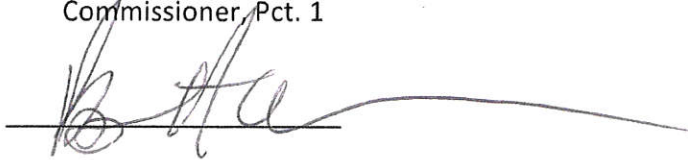
Judge Jeff Branick  
County Judge



Eddie Arnold  
Commissioner, Pct. 1



Michael Sinegal  
Commissioner, Pct. 3



Brent Weaver  
Commissioner, Pct. 2



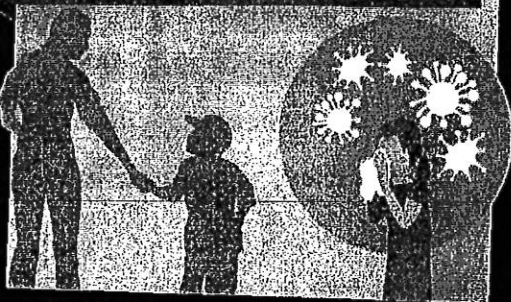
Everett A. Alfred  
Commissioner, Pct. 4

**COVID**  
CORONAVIRUS  
DISEASE **19**

# STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



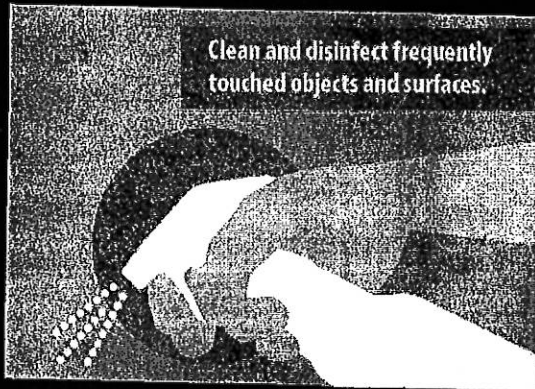
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



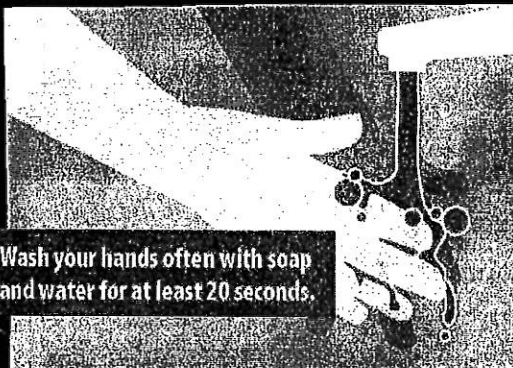
Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

US-21-15-A

## GENERAL MESSAGE (ICS 213)

1. Incident Name (Optional): SET COVID
2. To (Name and Position): AUTUMN BROWN - LOGISTICS (Emergency Management)
3. From (Name and Position):

# GENERAL MESSAGE (ICS 213)

<b>1. Incident Name</b> (Optional): SET COVID		
<b>2. To</b> (Name and Position): AUTUMN BROWN - LOGISTICS (Emergency Management) abrown@co.jefferson.tx.us		
<b>3. From</b> (Name and Position):		
<b>4. Subject:</b> Courthouse Supplies	<b>5. Date:</b>	<b>6. Time</b>
<b>7. Message:</b>  _____ Hand Sanitizer (gallons)  _____ Reusable Masks (for employees)  _____ Marking tape  _____ Cleaning wipes		
<b>8. Approved by:</b> Name: _____ Signature: _____ Position/Title: _____		
<b>9. Reply:</b>		
<b>10. Replied by:</b> Name: _____ Position/Title: _____ Signature: _____		
ICS 213	Date/Time: _____	