



Eighth Administrative Judicial Region

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

DAVID L. EVANS
Presiding Judge
Telephone (817) 884-1558

TRACY KEMP, CP
Administrative Assistant

Telephone (817) 884-1558
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E-Mail:
thkemp@tarrantcounty.com

June 1, 2020

Judge Andrew Vogel
City of River Oaks Municipal Court Presiding Judge
4900 River Oaks Boulevard
River Oaks, Tx. 76114

Dear Judge Vogel,

Re: Operating Plan for City of River Oaks, 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Evans", written over a circular stamp.

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 River Oaks Municipal Court

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the court,, the 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 of 6 feet minimum, maximum group size, and other restrictions and precautions.
2. All judges 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. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 2, 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: This is a small court , one judge , two clerks and a bailiff, and we will self monitor each other and report any health issues.
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 be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
5. Protective Measures: The public contact counter is protected by a glass screen and hand sanitizers are available to both the public and the staff working in the clerks office.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building:
2. On June 4, 2020, at 5:30 pm , we have only 54 persons scheduled, all first appearance cases, set, no trials, a normal appearance ratio historically never exceeds a 40 percent appearance, a majority of the appearances will be to show proof of compliance on registration , insurance and drivers license tickets, this docket will likely produce the appearance of 20 people . at the most. We make a list of the order of appearance and call cases in first in first out , unless, there are elderly or handicapped individuals which we will accommodate as required. The bailiff will control number of individuals in the court room at any one time so the specially

marked and distanced seating capacity is not exceeded. The Judge will begin hearing matters when the first person arrives and that flow will continue through the docket call.

3. On Saturday, June 6, 2020, I have three short docket calls, the first at 9am, 10 and 11am, consisting of 56, 36 and 32 persons respectively, these are all old cases scheduled for review of payment plans, and a 25 percent appearance ratio would be remarkable. These dockets will be handled as described above, except that these required hearings to give individuals the opportunity to deal with issues involved in the successful completion of the court's requirements.

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 being offered an alternative court date or being seen as soon as possible.

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 the courtroom.
3. The public restroom in the court building is open is cleaned after each court date.
4. Public common areas, including breakrooms, have been closed to the public.

Gallery:

1. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom has been determined and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff. The Gallery ordinarily seats 50 persons; however the safe inside the courtroom seating will be restricted to 8 safe zones or persons. The hallway and front lobby will afford 4 additional safe-waiting locations for individuals waiting to be directed to the court by the Bailiff.
2. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating.

Well:

1. In the courtroom, the witness stand, judge's bench, and clerk 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 each courtroom, and in 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. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, a staff person 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, a staff person 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 gloves and mask..

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building will be required 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 20 minutes will be provided surgical masks and required to wear them while in the court building if the supply is available.

Cleaning

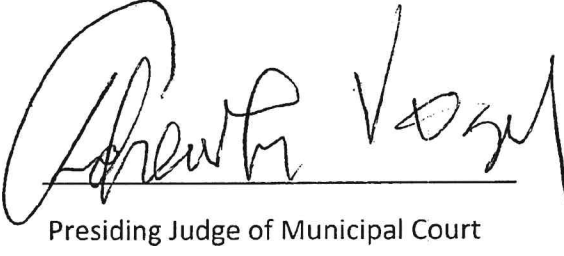
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least twice daily . Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtroom and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.

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

I have met with the Court Administrator. The City Administrator, Marvin Gregory, James Myrick, the City's Emergency Management person and our Bailiff, Robert Cantu in developing this Plan. I will circulate this plan with the Associate Judges, Cecilia Thomas and Jim Minter for their suggestions and to assure that operations consistent with these plans take place in our Court during this period. I have consulted with the Tarrant County Health Official and their response will be attached to this Plan

Date: 5/18/2020



Andrew Vogel

Presiding Judge of Municipal Court

City of River Oaks , Texas

817-480-6568

vogelaw@aol.com

Belinda Hernandez

Court Administrator

bhernandez@riveroakstx.com

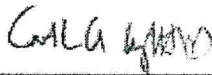
817-626-1597

Date 26 May 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

Tarrant County Local Health Authority & Medical Director or Tarrant County Deputy Local Health Authority & Assistant Medical Director has reviewed and approved the Guidance for All Court Proceedings During COVID-19 Pandemic.

Sincerely,



Catherine A. Colquitt, M.D.
Local Health Authority and Medical Director
Tarrant County, Texas



Dr. Kenton K. Murtly
Deputy Local Health Authority &
Assistant Medical Director
Tarrant County, Texas

Tarrant County Public Health

Accountability. Quality. Innovation.



A healthier community through leadership in healthy choices

From: Blanca L. Gonzales BLGonzales@tarrantcounty.com
Subject: River Oaks Operating Plan
Date: May 28, 2020 at 10:19:36 AM
To: andy.vogel.vogelaw@aol.com
Cc: [Vinny Taneja vtaneja@TarrantCounty.com](mailto:Vinny.Taneja@TarrantCounty.com), [Kenton K. Murthy
KKMurthy@tarrantcounty.com](mailto:Kenton.K.Murthy@tarrantcounty.com), [Catherine A. Colquitt
CAColquitt@TarrantCounty.com](mailto:Catherine.A.Colquitt@TarrantCounty.com), [Tracy Kemp
THKemp@TarrantCounty.com](mailto:Tracy.Kemp@TarrantCounty.com)

Good morning,

Per Dr. Colquitt request attached is the edits and approval letter for the Operational Plan for the River Oaks Municipal Court.

If you have any questions please call me at [817-321-5305](tel:817-321-5305).

Respectfully,

Blanca L. Gonzales

Blanca L. Gonzales
Executive Secretary to Local Health Authority &
Medical Director Dr. Catherine A. Colquitt
Tarrant County Public Health
1101 S. Main Street Suite 2419 | Fort Worth, TX 76104
Phone: 817-321-5305 | Fax: 817-850-8544
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VEERINDER (VINNY) TANEJA, MBBS, MPH
PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR



CATHERINE A. COLQUITT, M.D.
LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY & MEDICAL DIRECTOR



4900 River Oaks Boulevard  River Oaks, Texas  76114

Mayor
Herman D. Earwood

City Council
Mayor Pro-Tem-Place 4
Joe Ashton

Place 1
John Claridge

Place 2
Steve Holland

Place 3
Darren Houk

Place 5
Dan Chisholm

City Officers

City Manager
Marvin Gregory

City Secretary
Paula Luck

Fire Chief
Clinton "Russell" Shelley

Police Chief
Christopher Spieldenner

Public Works Director
Gordon Smith

Library Director
Anna Lee

Event Center Co- Directors
Shirley Bloomfield
Shirley Wheat

Emergency Management
Coordinator
James Myrick

Phone
(817) 626-5421

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Website
www.riveroakstx.com

May 29, 2020

Judge Evans, 8th Administrative Judge, Tarrant County
% Tracy Kemp
Administrative Assistant
Eighth Administrative Judicial Region
Tom Vandergriff Civil Courts Building
100 N. Calhoun St., 2nd Floor
Fort Worth, Tx. 76196-1148

Dear Honorable Judge David Evans:

Please accept this letter requesting approval of the Covid-19 Operating Plan for the City of River Oaks Municipal Court in order to reopen the River Oaks Municipal Court that was filed with your office by our Municipal Court Judge, Andrew Vogel on May 28, 2020.

I have reviewed the plan along with our City Manager and Emergency Management Coordinator and we find the plan to meet the minimum requirements for reopening our municipal court and therefore both myself and the City Manager evidenced by our signatures below do hereby respectfully request your approval of the plan and permit us to proceed with reopening our municipal court located at 4900 River Oaks Blvd. on June 4, 2020.

Should you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact me or our City Manager, Marvin C. Gregory III, at 817-626-5421, extension 324. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Herman D. Earwood
Mayor
City of River Oaks

Marvin C. Gregory III
City Manager
City of River Oaks

Attest:

Paula Luck
City Secretary
City of River Oaks

Attest:

Paula Luck
City Secretary
City of River Oaks