

**Addendum to the REVISED COVID-19 Operating Plan**  
**CITY OF DALLAS City Judiciary**  
*Effective on and after October 29, 2021*

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of jurors, litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, the courts of the **CITY OF DALLAS** will implement, in addition to the procedures and protocols in the December 31, 2020 REVISED COVID-19 Operating Plan, the following protective measures apply for In-Person Proceedings:

**General**

1. All judges will comply with the most recent Emergency Order as amended, issued by the Supreme Court of Texas and Court of Criminal Appeals, including conducting In-Person Jury Proceedings and according to the guidance issued by the Office of Court Administration.
2. Courts shall take precautions to ensure judges and court staff do not enter the Courthouse when there is a likelihood that they have been exposed to COVID19 in the prior 10 days or contracted COVID19.
3. All persons entering the Dallas Municipal Courthouse shall comply with the City of Dallas Municipal Courthouse Health and Safety Procedures and Protocols in effect. ALL INDIVIDUALS APPEARING IN PERSON TO THE CITY OF DALLAS MUNICIPAL COURTHOUSE WILL BE REQUIRED TO WEAR MASKS until further guidance.

**In Person JURY PROCEEDINGS -**

**Hearings on Objections or Motions Related to Proceeding**

1. Parties who are scheduled for a jury proceeding are encouraged to file any objections or motions related to proceedings at least 30 days prior to the trial setting.
2. Any objections or motions related to proceeding will be heard by the judge presiding over the case at least seven days prior to the jury proceeding or as soon as practicable if the objection or motion is made or filed within seven days of the jury proceeding.

**Communication Protocols**

1. Each judge with a jury proceeding will require the parties to communicate with the court if any participant in the jury proceeding, including attorneys, parties, attorney support staff, or witnesses, INTENDING TO ATTEND IN PERSON at the courthouse, has tested positive for COVID-19 within the previous 30 days prior to any portion of the jury proceeding, currently has symptoms of COVID-19, or has had recent known exposure to COVID-19.

### **Scheduling**

1. On the day of trial, parties must notify the Administrative Judge of trial readiness by 9:45 a.m. for morning trial dockets and by 1:45 p.m. for afternoon trial dockets.

### **Summoning Jurors**

1. Potential Jurors will be mailed information regarding the date of Jury Duty. Instructions provided will inform City of Dallas citizens of the City of Dallas Municipal Court COVID-19 Protocols and a Juror COVID-19 Questionnaire will be provided TO BE RETURNED ON DATE OF JURY DUTY.
2. Prior to joining the Central Jury Room on the date to appear, citizens will be asked to provide identification verifying their summons to jury service.
3. After potential venirepersons are admitted to the Central Jury Room, venirepersons will view a video of the courts and trial process. The Presiding Judge will then excuse all who have an exemption or disqualification with remaining jurors sworn in for service on the panel.

### **Face Coverings**

1. In addition to the requirements of the City of Dallas Municipal Court Revised COVID-19 Operating Plan, all persons entering the common areas of a courthouse, including a courtroom or any other location being used to conduct a jury trial, will be required to wear a face covering at all times.
2. All court participants will be required to wear face coverings.
3. Court participants who may need to lower their face mask to speak for a short period of time will be required to wear a face shield. When speaking, judges may permit a court participant to remove his or her mask so long as a face shield is worn and the person speaking is immobile, if necessary.

### **Social Distancing**

1. Social distancing of all court participants will be maintained at all times during the jury proceeding at the courthouse.
2. Special attention will be paid by the courts to require compliance with safety protocols at the courthouse, including modification of seating arrangements in the courtrooms, identifying specific courtrooms to be used for jury proceedings, specialized scheduling for jury proceedings, and identified areas to be used by jurors to ensure social distancing.

### **Arrangement of Courtroom**

1. The Presiding Judge of the court will coordinate and communicate with all parties, including the Administrative Judge, to ensure all protocols are understood, followed, and to discuss any special accommodations, if necessary.
2. Prior to the trial date the Presiding Judge will determine whether the in-person appearance is appropriate considering the circumstances.

### **Microphone Protection Protocols**

1. The courtroom microphone will be thoroughly disinfected after EACH use.

### **Exhibit/Evidence Management**

1. Judges will limit, to the degree possible, the use of physical or paper exhibits/evidence where feasible or appropriate by converting the exhibit/evidence to a digital form.
2. Parties seeking admission of any documentary evidence are requested to provide the documents for review to all parties and the Court via email prior to trial, if practical. The Presiding Judge will rule on evidence to be admitted at a designated hearing prior to trial.
3. The City of Dallas Records Department will provide an email address for all litigants to email evidence previously ruled admitted and marked, for imaging to file for publication during trial and court records.
4. During jury deliberations, judges will make efforts to provide the jury with access to digital exhibits/evidence that would normally be shared with the jury during deliberation.

**Witnesses**

1. All Witnesses will appear in person, unless prior arrangement has been made with the court at the pre-trial hearing and with consent of all parties.

**Cleaning**

1. In addition to the requirements of the City of Dallas Municipal Court Revised COVID-19 Operating Plan, frequent cleaning protocols in the courtrooms and facilities will be maintained throughout the jury proceeding as necessary or appropriate.

I have attempted to confer with all judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Addendum to the City of Dallas Municipal Court Operating Plan. 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.

Date: 12/6/2021



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Judge Preston Robinson  
CITY OF DALLAS, Administrative Judge