~~21-MICV-03~~
21 MICR 03

FILED
LORI OLIVER
DISTRICT CLERK
2021 MAR 24 P 1:06
DISTRICT COURT
SHELBY COUNTY, TEXAS
BY DEPUTY

**COVID-19**
**Minimum Standard Health Safety Protocols**
**Shelby County Courts**

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, the Courts of Shelby County will implement the following protocol.

These protocols are minimum standards that must be employed by all judges in the court buildings. Judges who wish to have in-person proceedings may have more stringent standards in their courtrooms, but may not have less stringent standards.

**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, as deemed appropriate by the Presiding Judge of the Court.

2. All courts must continue to use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.

3. All judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct in-person proceedings in accord with the recommendations of the National, State and Local Health authorities.

**Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Each judge and all court personnel will self-monitor his or her symptoms to evaluate exposure to COVID-19. If a staff member reports symptoms, they may be required to self-quarantine and not report to work, and will perform their work functions, as possible, remotely.

2. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than, 100.0°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 be required to self-quarantine and seek medical advice.

3. Judges and court staff are strongly encouraged, but not required to, (1) wear face coverings in Courtroom settings; and (2) practice social distancing.

Social Distancing

1. All persons permitted in the court building are strongly encouraged to maintain adequate social distancing of at least six feet.

2. Each restroom and elevator has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity has been posted on each restroom door.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be made available for public use in or near each Courtroom.

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, as necessary, for each space being utilized by the courts.

3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations around the various Courtrooms and court spaces.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building Courthouse Security will screen all court participants and observers regarding symptoms, exposure, or testing of COVID-19. Individuals feeling feverish or with measured temperatures equal to or greater than 100.0°F, or with new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea may not be permitted in a court facility.

2. Individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 within the past fourteen days may be refused admittance into the Courtrooms. Individuals who have

tested positive for COVID-19 within the past ten days may be refused admittance into the Courtrooms.

3. When individuals attempt to enter the court building Courthouse Security will use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 99.6°F may be refused admittance to the Courtrooms.

4. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court buildings 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.

5. Staff who are screening individuals entering the Courtrooms will be provided facial coverings and gloves.

**Witnesses**

1. Courts should inquire whether witnesses to proceedings have COVID-19-related issues. To the degree constitutionally permissible, judges should permit witnesses to testify remotely via videoconference, especially if that witness has symptoms of or a recent positive test for COVID-19, has been recently exposed, or is vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.

**Face Coverings**

1. All individuals entering the courtrooms will be offered disposable face coverings for use while in the courtroom or awaiting hearings in portions of the Courthouse while awaiting hearings or testifying. The use of face coverings is highly encouraged, but not required.

**Cleaning**

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

Date: March 23, 2021 LeAnn Kay Rafferty

LeAnn Kay Rafferty, 123rd Judicial District of Texas
Local Administrative District Judge