BY ORDER OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE OF FORT BEND COUNTY:

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE THIRTY-SIXTH EMERGENCY ORDER REGARDING THE COVID -19 STATE OF DISASTER, AND PURSUANT TO SECTION 22.0035(b) OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

Pursuant to the Supreme Court Order Thirty-Six, The OCA's Best Practices Guidelines issued March 17, 2021, Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Local Guidance from Fort Bend County Health and Human Services, and subject to Constitutional limitations:

Courts shall continue to use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely. In-person proceedings are allowed when the Minimum Standard Health Protocols and Universal face covering policies are enacted by the courts. Appropriate Face covering is defined as:

*Medical procedure masks

*Masks made with tightly woven fabrics (cotton and / or cotton blends)

*A piece of fabric fashioned to fit snugly upon the face, covering the mouth and the nose of the wearer

*Any mask MUST be sufficient to snugly cover the mouth and nose of the wearer

ALL FORT BEND COUNTY COURTS shall and **MUST** act in ALL cases, to avoid risk to staff, parties, attorneys, jurors; and the public require the wearing of masks / face coverings that provide coverage of the nose and mouth of ALL persons within their Courtrooms and facilities, except within the Judge's private chambers.

ALL PERSONS upon entering Fort Bend County Justice Center or **ANY** facility under the Jurisdiction of this Local Administrative Order, including all Justice of The Peace Courts, **MUST** wear appropriate face covering.

ALL PERSONS including, County Employees, Vendors, and Visitors, **SHALL** wear appropriate face coverings continuously and at all times while inside these facilities, except where the person is within a private office secured by a closed door that is not open to the public, general staff, or other Fort Bend County Employees.

Consistent with Supreme Court Order Thirty-Six, All Courts **SHALL** allow or may require any person involved in a proceeding to participate remotely, by teleconference, video conference, or other means.

Fort Bend County has employed Healthcare Screeners, assigned to the Justice Center. These Screeners will be positioned at points of entry to greet visitors, staff, and all other persons. Upon entry and at the point nearest the entrance into facilities subject to this Local Administrative Order, every person shall be required to answer whether the participant / person seeking entry:

* has Covid-19, or knows of another participant / person seeking entry, who has Covid-19,
* has a fever, chills,
* has a persistent cough,
* Has shortness of breath,
* Fatigue,
* Has muscle or body ache,
* Has an unusual headache,
* Has a loss of taste or smell,
* has vomiting, nausea, diarrhea,
* Has had any recent close contact with any person currently known to have tested positive for Covid-19 within the past fourteen (14) days.

ANY PERSON exhibiting or reporting Covid-19 symptoms will be turned away and instructed to contact the applicable court or work department.

ANY PERSON with a temperature higher than 99.5 will not be allowed in **ANY** Fort Bend Court buildings.

Judges and court staff **SHALL NOT** enter the Courthouse if they may have COVID-19 or have been exposed.

All courts and staff are urged to work remotely whenever possible and feasible.

All Courts shall limit the number of individuals on in-person dockets to twenty-four (24) per docket.

All Judges shall ensure social distancing guidelines are adhered to through-out the courthouse.

All Courts shall provide/ ensure that hand sanitizer is readily available for visitors, jurors, and staff.

The following criteria have been set forth by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in schools and it is hereby adopted for all Fort Bend County Courts, pursuant to guidance from the OCA, regarding opening the Courts to in-person proceedings:

Indicator	Low Transmission Green	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Total New Cases Per 100,00 persons in the past 7 days	0-9	10-49	50-99	>100
Percentage of PCR Test that are positive during the past 7 days	<5.0%	5.0-7.9%	8.0-9.99%	>10.0%
	Universal and correct use of mask is required	Universal and correct use of mask is required	Universal and correct use of mask is required	Universal and correct use of mask is required
	In- Person proceedings may take place	In-Person proceedings may take place	Hybrid proceedings and/or reduced attendance	No-In-Person proceedings Remote only

Vulnerable individuals, including those over age sixty-five, and individuals with serious underlying conditions (such as: hypertension, lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, those immune compromised person), can request accommodations to reduce their appearances in the courthouse.

This Order conforms to and adopts the protocols and procedures, as Ordered by the Thirty-sixth Emergency Order regarding the COVID -19 State of Disaster, and pursuant to section 22.0035(b) of the Texas Government Code.

Ordered and Adjudged on this, 19th Day of March, 2021

R. O'NEIL WILLIAMS
Local Administrative Judge
268th Judicial District Judge
Richmond, Fort Bend County Texas

FILED

2021 MAR 23 PM 3:11

CLERK DISTRICT COURT
FORT BEND CO., TX.