

## **COVID-19 Municipal Court Re-Open Plan for Suamico Area Joint Municipal Court**

Based upon the Supreme Court of Wisconsin Order filed on May 21, 2021 regarding modifications made to court procedures due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and whereas the number of newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 has decreased significantly as the number of vaccinated individuals has increased in Wisconsin, and the United States Center for Disease Controls declared on May 16, 2021, that "[f]ully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing," the following is the Re-Open Plan for the Suamico Area Joint Municipal Court.

### **General**

1. Beginning June 2, 2021, Suamico Area Joint Municipal Court will return to the procedures and function as it did prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
2. The Village of Suamico has also removed COVID-19 requirements and procedures at all of their facilities.

### **Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Judge and court staff will perform all the essential functions of their job in person at the municipal facilities.
2. There will no longer be any self-assessment for staff or screening questions for defendants.
3. Judges and court staff are no longer required to wear face coverings, but will continue to practice social distancing as possible and practice appropriate hand hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Protective Measures:
  - Face coverings will be available at the entrance to the court. Face coverings will no longer be mandatory but may be worn as a personal choice.
  - The judge and court clerks will be seated on the bench and the defendant will approach the podium before them while remaining at a social distance of at least 6 feet unless requested to approach the bench or clerk.
  - The clerks and judge will not wear gloves. Hand sanitizer will be readily available throughout the court room.
  - All doors to the courtroom will remain open to eliminate the need for touching of door handles.
  - Defendants can use their own pen or the court will provide a pen that will be for a one time use. All pens will be sanitized after the court session.
  - Payments will now be accepted in the courtroom.

### **Scheduling**

1. The court will resume its regular schedule.

## **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. The court 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.

## **Social Distancing**

### *Court Building*

1. The court will allow family members into the building during hearings as permitted by law and court procedure.
2. The court will continue to only have the lobby, court room and restrooms open to the public when court is in session.

### *Gallery*

1. The maximum number of persons safely permitted in the gallery of the courtroom will continue to be determined by the court and posted. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
2. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to provide appropriate social distance in courtroom seating. The court will continue to place chairs 6 feet apart.

### *Well*

1. In the courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, clerk, and court officer's seating have been arranged in such a way so that there is social distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.

All the above social distancing strategies will be regularly reviewed and modified as appropriate to safely accommodate as many citizens and staff as possible.

## **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the entrances to the building, at the doorway to the courtroom, and at the clerk's table.
2. Disinfectant spray and paper toweling has been placed at each counsel table, at the witness stand, on the judges' bench, and on the clerk's desk.
3. Center for Disease Control (CDC) flyers have been removed.

**Screening**

1. Screening will no longer take place. Everyone is expected to be candid and honest about their health and any condition or exposure they may be experiencing.

**Face Coverings**

1. Face coverings are no longer mandatory for court staff or the public but are provided for those who wish to wear one as a personal choice.

**Cleaning**

1. The court building will go back to the regularly scheduled cleaning by Village staff.

2. The court building will maintain the cleaning supplies necessary to disinfect appropriately for the coronavirus if needed.

**Other**

Juvenile hearings will continue to be held in the large conference room instead of the judge's chambers to allow participants more room for social distancing. The juvenile and parent/guardian will be seated at a separate table from court staff but there will no longer be a Plexiglas barrier between the tables and no masking or other accommodations will be required.

Date: 5/24/2021  
Presiding Judge

  
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Judge Kevin A Rathburn