

## **COVID-19 Municipal Court Operating Plan for Suamico Area Joint 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 courts, the Suamico Area Joint Municipal Court will implement the following protective measures:

### **General**

1. The county judiciary has established a stakeholder committee to discuss and consider the recommendations outlined in the Wisconsin COVID- 19 Task Force report.
2. All judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. Before calendaring in-person hearings, the stakeholder committee has addressed staffing needs and has procured any equipment and supplies deemed necessary.
4. The stakeholder subcommittee will continue to meet regularly, maintain communication with the local health authority and the county office of risk management, and will adjust this operating plan as necessary with any changes in the public health conditions in the county.
5. Judge will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 17, 2020.

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

1. Judge and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely will continue to do so, whenever possible.
2. The following procedures have been implemented to monitor the health of Judge and Court Staff:

Prior to reporting to court, each person is to conduct the following self-assessment.

- Fever of 100.4 F or higher
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills and repeated shaking
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

If you have any of these symptoms, DO NOT report to court, call the clerk or judge.

3. Judges and court staff will be required to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hand hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Protective Measures:
  - Face coverings must be worn by everyone entering the court. If you do not have one, the court staff will provide one.
  - The judge will remain up on his bench, court clerks will be seated below and in front of the judge. There will be a Plexiglas barrier between the clerks and the defendants.
  - Clerks and judge will also wear gloves.
  - All possible doors will remain open to keep handles from being touched.
  - 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.

- No payments will be taken in the courtroom. Envelopes will be provided to deposit payment in the drop box.

### **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Initial Appearances - June 17, July 15, Aug 19, and Sept 16, 2020  
Trials – August 5 and Sept 2, 2020

### **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.
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by a remote appearance upon request.

### **Social Distancing**

#### *Court Building*

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. The only areas open to the public will be the lobby, court room and restrooms.
3. Each restroom has been evaluated to determine the appropriate capacity to ensure social distancing and the maximum capacity has been posted on each restroom door.
4. Public common areas are marked with floor markings for proper distancing.

#### *Gallery*

5. 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.
6. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Chairs have been positioned 6 feet apart.

#### *Well*

7. 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.

### **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 counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' bench, and on the clerk's desk.
3. CDC flyers outlining appropriate hygiene, social distancing, or public safety have been posted in multiple locations of the court building.

**Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, the court officer 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. If required to appear in court, the appropriate court office will be immediately notified.
2. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including face protection, gloves and hand sanitizer.
3. No inmates are being transported from the jail to the court building at this time.

**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.

**Cleaning**


1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms after each court session.
2. Court building cleaning staff have been provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
3. Court building cleaning staff have been trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

**Other**

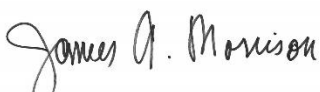
Juvenile hearings will be moved to the large conference room from the judge's chambers to allow participants more room for social distancing. The juvenile and parent/guardian will be seated at a separate table from court staff with a Plexiglas barrier between. Table and chairs will be sanitized between each defendant.

I have conferred with our clerk regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I also consulted with the Village Administrator. The clerk, the administrator and myself will continue to assess and update this plan as needed. I, as the judge of this court covered by this Operating Plan, will conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 5/27/2020  
Presiding Judge

  
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Judge Kevin A Rathburn

Date: 6/3/2020  
Chief Judge Approval

  
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Chief Judge Morrison