

**GENERAL ORDER RELATING TO:
Minimum Standard Health Protocols for the District, County Court at Law Court,
County Court, Justice of the Peace Courts and Municipal Courts of Cass County, Texas**

In accordance with the Texas Supreme Court's Thirty-Sixth Emergency Order regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster and 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 **Cass County** will implement the following minimum standard health protocols for court proceedings and the public attending court proceedings that will be employed in all courtrooms, subject to the discretion of the judge of the individual court:

1. All judges will comply with the Texas Supreme Court's Emergency Orders and will implement the best practices for health and safety as recommended by the Texas Office of Court Administration, Texas Department of State Health Services, and the U.S. Centers For Disease Control and will continue to require social distancing, face coverings, and other recommended restrictions and precautions, as deemed appropriate, in the discretion of the presiding judge of the court, given spacing requirements and proceeding participants. These protocols will be reviewed monthly based on Coronavirus activity in the county as reported by DSHS.
2. All judges will use all reasonable efforts to continue to conduct proceedings remotely and upon request and good cause shown by a court participant other than a juror— including but not limited to a party, an attorney, a witness, or a court reporter—a court must permit the participant to participate remotely in any proceeding, subject to constitutional limitations.
3. All courts will acquire prior approval for all jury proceedings from the Local Administrative District Judge or presiding judge of municipal courts, as applicable.
4. Any court conducting a jury trial will consider on the record, if a court of record, any objection or motion related to COVID-19 at least 7 days before the jury proceeding, and as soon as practicable if filed less than seven days before the jury proceeding.
5. All courts will inquire into and permit all communication necessary to attempt to ensure that no parties, counsel, court personnel, witnesses, or other participants of any in-person proceeding have (i) tested positive for COVID-19 in the previous 10 days, (ii) have had symptoms of COVID -19 in the previous 10 days, or (iii) have any recent known exposure to COVID-19 within the previous 14 days.
6. All judges shall excuse or re-schedule any prospective juror who provides information regarding their recent COVID-19 infection or recent exposure and the Judges will excuse any prospective juror who provides information regarding a particular vulnerability to COVID-19 and requests to be excused or re-scheduled.
7. The courts will evaluate and coordinate their schedules on an ongoing basis to minimize the number of in-person hearings being conducted at the same time in the same courthouse. Justice of the Peace Courts and municipal courts will schedule as appropriate for the particular matter and courtroom space being utilized.

Signed: March 11, 2021


10:50 am, March 11, 2021
Unique Digital Signature Identifier:
404682781347906370-1615481429413

Bill Miller, 5th Judicial District of Texas
Cass County Local Administrative District Judge