

**BROOKS H. HAGLER**  
DISTRICT JUDGE



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**259<sup>th</sup> Judicial District**

**MICHELLE LOPEZ**  
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March 18, 2021

Judge Skelton  
P.O. Box 2797  
Albany, Texas 76430

Judge Breeden  
P.O. Box 2211  
Albany, Texas 76430

Judge Spurgin  
P.O. Box 148  
Anson, Texas 79501

Judge Guernsey  
P.O. Box 345  
Anson, Texas 79501

**RE: COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN FOR THE JUDICIARY IN JONES & SHACKELFORD COUNTIES**

Dear Judges:

Pursuant to the most recent Orders from the Texas Supreme Court and best practices guidelines from the Office of Court Administration and under my authority as the local administrative judge, I have updated the operating plan for the judiciary in Jones and Shackelford Counties.

Please post this plan on your court website and/or the door to your courtroom.

Thank you for your attention in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brooks H. Hagler".

Brooks H. Hagler  
Presiding Judge

BHH/sf

**JONES AND SHACKELFORD COUNTIES**

# **COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN FOR THE JONES & SHACKELFORD COUNTIES JUDICIARY**

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 **Jones & Shackelford Counties** will implement the following protective measures:

## **General**

1. All judges will comply with 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.
2. All judges will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. The local administrative district judge will maintain regular communication with the county judges and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the county.
4. Judges may begin setting in-person proceedings immediately.

## **Judge and Court Staff Health**

1. Judge and Court Staff Monitoring Requirements: Upon initially entering the courtroom the Judge and all court staff will have their temperature taken and will only be allowed to proceed if the temperature reading is less than 100.0°F.
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 not be permitted to enter the courtroom and should seek medical advice.
3. Judges and court staff will be required to practice social distancing, wear face coverings if within 6 feet of other parties and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations at all time.
4. Protective Measures: face masks will be provided.

## **Scheduling**

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Any use of the District Courtroom must be scheduled through the District Judge's Office.

## **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. Individuals who are in vulnerable populations may contact the court and identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and therefore be allowed to receive special accommodations. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated by allowing for hearings to be

rescheduled if needed, specially set hearings to allow for minimum contact with others and allow remote hearings/hybrid hearings as available.

### **Social Distancing**

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the courthouse and courtroom will be required to maintain adequate social distancing of at least six (6) feet.
2. No more than two (2) individuals not from the same household will be permitted in an elevator.

#### *Gallery*

3. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each courtroom has been determined and posted. The capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
4. The gallery of the courtroom has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

#### *Well*

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

### **Hygiene**

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at the counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judges' bench, at the entrances to the building, outside of elevators on each floor (or inside the elevator), and outside of each courtroom entrance.
2. Tissues have been placed near the door of the courtroom, at counsel tables, at the witness stand, on the judge's bench, and in the hallways.
3. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

### **Screening**

1. When individuals attempt to enter the courtroom, they will be required to sign a sworn statement for admittance to court that states they are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms. Individuals who are symptomatic will be refused admittance to the courtroom.
2. When individuals attempt to enter the courtroom, the bailiff may use an infrared thermometer to determine the temperature of the individual. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°F will be refused admittance to the courtroom.
3. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court building 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.
4. Staff who are screening individuals entering the court building will be provided personal protective equipment, including gloves and face masks.

### **Face Coverings**

1. All individuals entering the courtroom are 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.

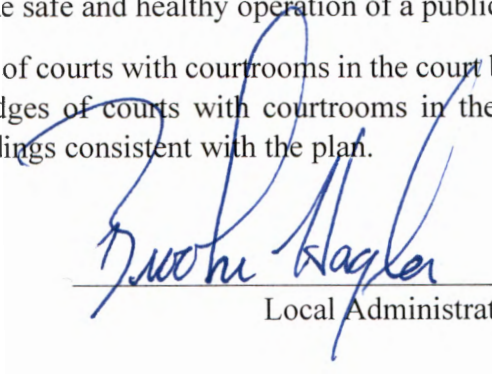
**Cleaning**

1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building.
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.

Notwithstanding the above-referenced provisions, the Best Practices for All Court Proceedings During COVID-19 Pandemic (Effective March 2021), is incorporated herein as if set forth fully and will be recommended as protocol for the safe and healthy operation of a public courtroom.

I have conferred with all judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Operating Plan. I will ensure that the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: 3/18/2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Duane Hagler", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Local Administrative District Judge