

# COVID-19 Operating Plan for Resumption of Jury Trials Collin County Court System

*Effective Date: June 1, 2021*

This plan incorporates by reference all the terms, practices and protective measures in the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Courthouse Facilities Controlled by Collin County.

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of jurors, litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, Collin County will provide and recommend the following additional protective measures for jury trials:

## **General**

1. The Collin County Courts will limit the number of jurors summonsed to allow for reasonable social distancing in the courthouse. The maximum capacity of the Central Jury Room for Collin County is 600 persons. The trial itself will take place in the courtroom with the practices outlined herein.

## **Juror and Court Staff Health**

2. Masks will be available, or jurors may wear their own when they enter the courthouse. Until the final jury is actually selected, seated and sworn, everyone appearing as a prospective juror will be strongly encouraged to wear a mask.
3. Microphones may be assigned to individual jurors for their sole use for at least the minimum number needed to cover the panel and strikes.
4. Jurors will be asked to limit the number of personal items they bring. Jurors will not be permitted to place personal items on surrounding chairs.
5. Hand sanitizer (alcohol based) will be available to jurors at multiple locations inside the courthouse and Central Jury Room, and jurors may ask Court Security Officers to make it available at their seat once they are selected to the final jury and seated in the courtroom.

## **Vulnerable Populations**

6. 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.
7. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for jury service may contact the jury services clerks and reschedule their jury service for a future time to be determined by the juror.

## **Social Distancing**

### *Gallery*

8. Participants will be strongly encouraged to social distance.
9. Those selected to serve as jurors for the trial will be seated during the trial to achieve

reasonable social distancing.

10. Courtroom seating will be staggered to promote social distancing.

*Well*

11. Plexiglas barriers will be utilized in appropriate places in the courtroom.

**Screening**

12. Jurors will be notified they may contact the jury clerks to reschedule their service if they:

- a) have been diagnosed by a licensed physician as having coronavirus anytime within the past 30 days;
- b) are actively caring for a family member or loved one who has tested positive for the Coronavirus; or
- c) are now in self-quarantine status and that status will continue during the date on their jury summons.

**Other**

A copy of the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Courthouse Facilities Controlled by Collin County, the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Resumption of Jury Trials, and the attached juror letter addressing their upcoming jury service in the era of Coronavirus will all be posted on the Jury Services website for Collin County, as well as the websites for each County and District Court.