

Justice of the Peace Precinct 3 recognizes the need to protect the public and ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorney’s, visitors, court staff and the judge. In an effort to help the spread of COVID-19, the court has implemented the following protective measures:

“NON-APPEARANCE” METHODS FOR CASE RESOLUTION

A majority of criminal cases can be resolved outside of the courtroom. We are allowing defendants to handle their cases through email or mail; they just need to contact the court directly for details. **CDL holders, Assault violations and/or defendants under 18 years of age do not qualify.**

- You can contact a member of the court by calling 281-364-4284 or email jp3_main@mctx.org.
- Please visit our website for additional information www.mctxjp3.org

SCHEDULING

For all in-court proceedings, the following measurements are required

- The judge and court staff will make their best effort to reduce the number of participants for each docket and abide by the social distancing guidelines listed below.
- Only case participants will be allowed to enter the courtroom or waiting area, family and friends will need to wait outside the building or in their vehicles.
- No early arrivals will be permitted.
- Face coverings and gloves will be available, but not mandatory.

SCREENING

- Anyone scheduled for an in-person hearing/trial that is exhibiting the below presumed COVID-19 symptoms, **MUST** contact the court immediately. If these symptoms are present at the time of a court hearing, participants may be asked to leave and reschedule.

♦ Cough	♦ Sore Throat
♦ Shortness of Breath	♦ Loss of taste or smell
♦ Difficulty Breathing	♦ Diarrhea
♦ Chills/repeated shaking	♦ Feeling feverish
♦ Muscle Pain	♦ Temperature 100.0 or greater
♦ Headache	♦ Exposure to COVID-19

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- The judge will determine the maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of the courtroom and will post that information outside and within said courtroom. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by the court staff.
- The judge and court team will ensure appropriate social distancing for the seating areas within the gallery of the courtroom as well as counsel tables, witness stand, judges bench, clerk and bailiff area.
- All persons not of the same household will be required to maintain at least 6 feet apart in all lobby/ common areas and the courtroom.
- Six feet markers are placed throughout the lobby, waiting areas and the courtroom. Once in the courtroom, individuals will be seated in pre-marked, designated areas for plaintiff and defendant/respondent.
- Individuals should remain in their designated areas unless otherwise directed by the bailiff, court clerk or the judge.
- Public restrooms were evaluated to determine maximum capacity and that number is posted near each restroom to ensure social distancing.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- Our court is very sensitive to individuals whom fall into the vulnerable population in regards to COVID-19 and will make special accommodations to assist them in handling their cases remotely.
- Vulnerable individuals are those over the age of 65 or those with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma and those with compromised immune system.
- If you are caring for an individual that falls into this category, please contact the court immediately.

HYGIENE

- Visual aid signage has been placed throughout the courtroom and lobby areas reminding individuals to practice good hygiene.
- The public will have access to the following in lobby and courtroom areas:
 - Hand Sanitizer
 - Tissues
 - Face Masks and Gloves

CLEANING

- The courtroom, lobby areas and back office areas are routinely cleaned and sanitized by the Montgomery County Custodial Service Department.

JUDGE AND COURT STAFF HEALTH

- Judges and Court Staff who have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 99.6° 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 report to work.
- The judge and court staff will be provided face coverings, and are encouraged to practice social distancing and appropriate hygiene recommendations at all times.
- The judge and court staff are encouraged to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in their courtroom and offices.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

THERE WILL BE NO TOLERANCE FOR ATTORNEYS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION CREATED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. ANY SUCH CONDUCT SHALL BE REPORTED TO THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL ON THE FIRST OFFENSE. ALL JUDGES AND LAWYERS, AS OFFICERS OF THE COURT, ARE CALLED UPON TO CONDUCT OURSELVES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TEXAS LAWYERS' CREED.

OPEN TEXAS FAST FACTS

STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

In addition to the Health Guidelines, these are minimum standards.

- Screen employees before coming into the business daily.
- Train all employees on appropriate cleaning etiquette.
- Regularly and frequently clean and disinfect any regularly touched surfaces.
- Disinfect any items that come into contact with customers.
- Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar readily available.
- Place readily visible signage to remind everyone of best hygiene practices.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Send home any employee who has any of the following new or worsening symptoms:

- Cough
- Diarrhea
- Chills
- Shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100°F
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed positive with COVID-19.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

WHEN POSSIBLE, STAY HOME



COVER NOSE AND MOUTH



DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE



WASH OR SANITIZE HANDS



AVOID CONTACT WITH SICK PEOPLE



KEEP AT LEAST 6 FEET APART



COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES



DISINFECT SURFACES



SELF-SCREEN

PHASE 1 BUSINESSES

Businesses listed in Phase 1 are allowed to reopen when GA-18 expires after April 30, 2020.

- Libraries and museums
- Malls
- Movie theaters
- Restaurants
- Retail

Must limit their capacity to 25% of their listed occupancy, interactive displays and food courts remain closed.

Outdoor sports

No more than four participants are playing together at one time, keeping social distancing.

Local government

Operations, including county and municipal government relating to permitting, recordation and document-filing services.

REINTRODUCTION TO WORKPLACE OF AN ILL EMPLOYEE

Do not allow employees with the new or worsening signs or symptoms listed, and/or a positive COVID-19 test return to work until:

At least **3 days** since recovery (no fever without the use of fever reducing medicine); respiratory symptoms **improve**; and at least **7 days** from symptom onset



If an employee has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing self-isolation a medical professional's note with an alternate diagnosis **is required**.