

COVID-19 Circuit Court Safety Plan for Taylor County

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 Taylor County will implement the following protective measures:

General

1. The county judiciary has established a stakeholder's committee to discuss and consider the recommendations outlined in the Wisconsin COVID- 19 Task Force report.
2. All judges and court commissioners will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. Before calendaring in-person hearings, the stakeholder's committee has addressed staffing needs and has procured any equipment and supplies deemed necessary.
4. The stakeholder's 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. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings on a case by case basis to be determined by the judge.

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judges, commissioners 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: The judges, commissioners and court staff will follow any protocol implemented by Taylor County, which are consistent with Taylor County's public health guidelines. They will self-report as directed under Taylor County's guidelines.
3. Judges, commissioners and court staff will be required to wear face coverings in the courtrooms, jury room and confined court related spaces, practice social distancing, and practice appropriate hand hygiene as recommended by the CDC.
4. Protective Measures: PPE and hand sanitizer are provided to judges, commissioners and court staff and cleaning of courtrooms and clerk of court offices are completed several times throughout the day.

Scheduling

1. The following court schedules are established to reduce occupancy in the court building: Court officials, at their discretion, will continue to use remote means to conduct hearings to reduce courtroom occupancy, and hearings are scheduled further apart to reduce the number of people in the courtroom at one time. Public access to open hearings is provided by broadcast to YouTube.

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. Vulnerable populations will be accommodated, upon request, by using zoom video or telephone on a case by case basis.

Social Distancing

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. No more than two individuals not from the same household will be permitted in an elevator. If more than one individual from the same household is in an elevator, no other individuals will be permitted in the elevator.
3. Each restroom has signage to ensure social distancing and will be cleaned regularly.
4. Taylor County does not have breakrooms or snack rooms available to the public.

Gallery

5. The maximum number of persons permitted in the gallery of each 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 courtrooms has been marked to identify appropriate social distancing in the seating. Seating is limited to every other row.

Well

7. 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 6 feet between each space.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at strategic locations throughout the courthouse.
2. Disinfectant wipes or spray and towelings have been placed at a cleaning station in each courtroom.
3. CDC flyers outlining appropriate hygiene and social distancing have been posted at multiple locations on each floor of the Taylor County Courthouse.

Screening

1. When individuals enter the Taylor County Courthouse they will be subject to Taylor County public health guidelines.

Face Coverings

1. All members of the public entering the Taylor County Courthouse are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings at all times.

2. All persons present in the courtroom and court-related confined spaces shall wear face coverings. Individuals may bring face coverings with them, but disposable face masks will be provided by the court upon request.
3. Any witness is exempted from the masking requirement if the court determines on the record that it is necessary that the witness not wear a face covering during the witness' testimony in order to evaluate the witness' credibility.
4. Notices regarding this requirement will be posted at the entrance of each courtroom and any other court-related confined space.

Cleaning

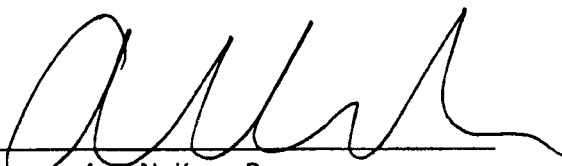
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building at least every day.
2. Counsel table and common areas in the courtrooms will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day. If any party feels that additional cleaning or disinfecting is necessary, cleaning materials will be available at the cleaning station in the courtrooms for that purpose. It is recognized that, depending upon the level of use, the cleaning and disinfecting may need to be done more often.
3. Taylor County continuously runs the HVAC system.

Other

It is understood that public awareness of these measures is necessary. This information will be shared through press releases, county websites, social media, state and local bar associations, and any other appropriate public sources of information.

In developing the plan, I consulted with the stakeholder's committee. The committee members are listed on the attachment.

Date: 6/22/2020



Ann N. Knox-Bauer

Date: 6/22/2020



Chief Judge Approval

Stakeholder Committee Members

Ann Knox-Bauer – Circuit Court Judge
Colleen Handrick – Emergency Management Director
Patty Krug – Health Department Director
Marie Koerner – Human Resource Manager
Courtney Graff – Corporation Counsel
Corey Dassow – Chief Deputy, Taylor Co. Sheriff's Department
Lisa Kauffman – Court Security Officer
Rose Thums – Clerk of Court
Cindy Sommer – Judicial Assistant
Jim Metz – County Board Chairman
Kristi Tlusty – District Attorney
Nick Smith – State Public Defender
Karl Kelz – Court Commissioner
Joe Svejda – Buildings, Grounds & Parks Director
Michelle Hubbard – Department of Corrections Field Supervisor