

RENTON MUNICIPAL COURT

COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN

Judge Terry L. Jurado
Judge Kara Murphy Richards

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INTRODUCTION

The Renton Municipal Court works with local health officials to ensure the health and well-being of court employees, litigants, attorneys, customers, and the general public while performing our lawfully required duties.

This document addresses how social distancing and other public health measures are being addressed. The court acknowledges the risks and personal stress involved in operating during this challenging time, but we are committed to mitigating those risks as much as possible and are stressing individual responsibility to help minimize those risks. With that, we appreciate your cooperation and patience as we resume operations in accordance with state and local guidelines.

This plan will be reviewed regularly as conditions and needs change, health and safety requirements are updated, and lessons learned.

HEALTH & SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

If you are feeling ill or experiencing flu like symptoms, do not enter Renton City Hall, the courtrooms or other court areas. Contact a supervisor, the court, or your attorney for instructions. You will be subject to a non-invasive health screen upon entry to City Hall. You will be asked to read the following questions:

Do you have any of the following:

- ✓ Fever or Chills
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Muscle or body aches
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ New loss of taste or smell
- ✓ Sore Throat
- ✓ Congestion or Runny Nose



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- ✓ Nausea or Vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhea

Are you ill or caring for someone who is ill?

In the two weeks before you felt sick, did you:

- ✓ Have contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
- ✓ Live in or visit a place where COVID-19 is spreading?

If you answer yes to any of the above health screening questions, you will not be permitted to enter. Until further notice, all individuals over the age of five (5) entering the court facility must wear a face covering/ mask that covers their nose and mouth. A plastic shield alone, without a mask, will not be sufficient. Social distancing guidelines (for individuals who do not reside together) of six (6) feet must be observed as best as possible.

Cleaning of high touch areas will be conducted throughout the day. High touch areas include door handles, light switches, copy machines, keyboards, computer touch screens, mice, kiosks, desks, and conference tables. Anyone sitting at counsel table will be requested to wipe it down following their hearing. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be available and located throughout the facility.

COURT CALENDARS

When City Hall is open, daily court calendars are posted near the courtroom entryway. Calendars may be designated “in-person”, “remote”, or “hybrid”. As conditions change, calendar types may also change. It is critical for all parties to maintain current contact information in the event hearing types change due to the prevailing health situation. Facility space will dictate calendar volume and frequency per the court’s direction.

LOBBY

All members of the public will have the opportunity to view COVID-19 signage prior to entry in the court area. Absent a medical exemption, all people over the age of five (5) must wear a mask/face covering. Occupancy limitations and social distancing requirements must be adhered to and will be enforced by court team personnel. Any person refusing to abide by posted facility rules may be asked to leave the building.



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COURT SECURITY

Security Officer

- Court security officers will wear face coverings and gloves when on duty.
- At least every hour, all security equipment will be wiped down with approved disinfectant wipes.
- At least every hour, surface areas often touched (keyboards, telephone, hand wands, door handles, and door push pads) shall be sprayed/wiped down with approved disinfectant wipes.
- A thorough wipe down shall be conducted at the beginning and end of each shift.

Screening

- Individuals entering the court area shall be subject to a thorough security screen and non-invasive health screen.
- The security officer will limit the total number of people allowed in the court areas. Area capacity limitations shall be posted and easily visible.

Face Coverings

- All persons entering the court area shall wear a mask or face covering. Masks and gloves are available upon request.
- Medical exemptions shall be addressed immediately prior to entry and entry must be approved by a member of the leadership team to ensure the exempt person understands distancing and safety requirements



RECEPTION/CUSTOMER SERVICE

Plexiglass barriers are in place at each customer service point. Team members must conduct business behind the barriers and must avoid entering the lobby to assist customers. Court team members must wipe down their work areas before and after their shifts and frequently throughout the workday. Approved wipes and disinfectant spray will be provided for these purposes.

COURTROOM

All seating for court attendees and jurors will be designated with obvious signage to ensure proper distancing. Courtroom tables and seating will be cleaned before and after court sessions and during the noon recess. Additional courtroom safety rules:

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- Food and drinks are not permitted in the courtroom.
- Plexiglass will be installed to protect court personnel, attendees, and witnesses.
- Gloves must be worn when exchanging documents and exhibits with witnesses and court team members.
- Masks/face coverings must be worn unless explicit permission to remove them is given by the court. Mask removal circumstances may include witness testimony, interpreter considerations, jury selection, identification, hearing difficulties, disabilities, and other limitations that may affect the proceedings.

JURY TRIALS

- All prospective jurors shall undergo a non-invasive health screen prior to entry to City Hall.
- Each empaneled juror will receive one KN95 mask at the beginning of the trial and after the noon recess.
- Jurors will be provided with a bottle of water they may bring into the courtroom
- Counsel tables and jury seating will be at least six (6) feet apart and proper distancing enforced.

ATTORNEY MEETING ROOMS

Unless acceptable communication between the parties is impossible or too difficult, masks/face coverings are required in meeting/conference rooms and proper distancing is expected. Parties are expected to wipe down surfaces within the rooms following their use. Cleaning supplies will be in each room.

COURT TEAM MEMBERS

All court team members are expected to follow any applicable health directives and court policies which include: Wearing face coverings at all times unless alone in a closed office space, maintaining six feet of distance as much as possible, performing frequent hand washing, using of hand sanitizer, and limiting interactions in enclosed spaces such as break areas, copy room, and meeting areas.

The court will provide support by allowing telecommuting as much as possible without compromising operations or customer service, providing face coverings, hand sanitizer, gloves, and cleaning supplies, and providing safety training to prevent disease transmission.

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The court has implemented employee self-screening protocol developed with the assistance of local public health authorities. Team members are expected to review and properly acknowledge documents prior to entering work areas.

UPDATES

This document is current as of September 10, 2020 and will be updated as circumstances change, lessons are learned and/or directives are modified. The most recent version will be available on the court's web page.

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