

Second Amended COVID-19 Public Proceedings Operating Plan Ninth Judicial District

“Court-Side”

Lander, Fremont County Wyoming

450 North 2nd Street Lander, WY 82520

District Court & Circuit Court

June 7, 2021

Judges-Conder, Tyler, and Denhardt

Purpose:

The purpose of this operating plan is to help maintain and ensure the health and safety of our community, while providing quality and timely services. This plan applies to the “court-side” of the Fremont County Courthouse and is intended to provide a set of commonsense guidelines to help us all safely and effectively carry out our duties in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Although no person or government agency can guarantee that we will not be exposed to COVID-19, the court system can and will take reasonable precautions to help ensure the safety of those participating in the court system. Accordingly, this plan has been developed in conjunction with the guidelines set forth by the State Public Health Officer, the Wyoming Department of Health, the Wyoming Supreme Court, and the United States Centers for Disease Control.

Proposed Start Date:

If health and safety conditions in Fremont County permit, this plan will go into effect June 7, 2021.

Social Distancing - Court Staff:

* All courts and all court staff will continue to comply with the well-known guidelines concerning social distancing and hygiene, namely: a minimum of six feet between individuals; regular hand washing; avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth; and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.

Social Distancing Among the Public - Court Building:

Court Filings & Other Business with Clerks’ Offices

* The District Court Clerks’ Office will be open to the public for in-person business, without an appointment, Monday through Friday from 8:00a.m. to 12:00p.m., and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

* Those conducting in-person business with the Clerks' Offices should enter individually and should not bring family, friends or others unless necessary.

Entry to Court Building – Screening & Notices – For Everyone

* Anyone entering the “court-side” of the Fremont County Courthouse to attend court hearings or to conduct business with the Courts or Clerks' Offices must enter through the main doors on the west side of the building and will be screened by Court Security prior to entry. This screening includes, but is not limited to:

1. Observation and questioning of those who enter to determine if they have any COVID-19 symptoms (including a temperature reading of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or more) or have been in contact with anyone who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Anyone exhibiting the symptoms of COVID-19 or having recent contact with a confirmed case will not be allowed into the court building, and alternative arrangements will be made to address their needs at the court building.
2. Observation and questioning of those who enter the building will be made regarding their status as a vulnerable individual, and they will be notified of their ability to make alternative arrangements to avoid having to enter the court building.
3. Conducting standard Court Security screening procedures such as questioning, observation and use of magnetometer to prevent contraband, weapons, or other inappropriate items from being brought into the court building.

* All individuals allowed access to the building should leave as soon as possible after their business is concluded.

* Notices will be conspicuously posted throughout the court building reminding everyone of the now well-known and commonsense social distancing and hygiene guidelines and protocols.

* Notices will be conspicuously posted on entry doors, courtroom doors, and throughout the court building notifying all those entering the court building that if they are or feel sick, they must not enter the building, and alternative arrangements will be made to file documents or appear in court.

* Notices will be conspicuously posted on or near entry doors, courtroom doors, and throughout the court building notifying members of vulnerable populations that they should not enter the court building and they will be provided directions to make alternative arrangements to conduct their business.

* Those entering the court building must comply with the following *social distancing and hygiene guidelines*:

1. Those NOT from the same household should maintain social distance - six feet apart.

2. Face coverings are recommended for those who have not been vaccinated and those who cannot maintain a social distance. The court will provide face coverings for those entering the court building who wish to use a face covering.

3. When social distancing cannot be maintained among the Court, Court Staff/Personnel, the Parties and/or Court Security, these individuals will wear face coverings during court proceedings.

4. Must sanitize hands before entering the court building. A sanitizer station will be provided near the entry to the court building.

5. Must comply with all signs, markings and barriers located throughout the court building, which will help notify entrants where to sit and stand to help ensure social distancing regarding seating in the courtroom and waiting in line at clerks' offices. The Courts and Clerks' Offices will mark and close certain areas to comply with social distancing.

* All counsel, parties, witnesses, and select members of the public shall leave the courtroom and court building as soon as possible after their hearing is complete, and they must avoid congregating in the building.

Other:

* The Courts, Courts' staff, Clerks' Offices, Court Security, counsel, parties, witnesses and members of the public having business before the courts and Clerks' Offices should make reasonable efforts to comply with the orders and guidance provided by the Wyoming Supreme Court; the Wyoming Department of Health; the Fremont County Public Health Department; and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

* Court Security will make reasonable efforts to maintain a log of those entering the building and the time they entered and left. This will be done in an effort to allow public health officials to conduct contact tracing if there is a positive COVID-19 case associated with a person entering the building.

Cleaning:

* In addition to the daily cleaning provided by Fremont County Maintenance staff, the frequently touched surfaces in the courtroom (witness stand, counsel tables, lectern etc.) will be cleaned before and after each hearing/use by the court/court staff.

Scheduling & Conducting Non-Jury Trial Hearings and Proceedings:¹

* Each court may develop and implement more detailed protocols for carrying out the general provisions set forth in this plan regarding in-person court hearings.

* Each Judge will develop and implement their own individualized protocols and procedures for conducting non-jury trial and in person courtroom procedures. Attorneys and members of the public should familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures of each specific court and judge. These specific policies and procedures may be set forth below and/or may be set forth in a separate document provided by the court to counsel and the public as appropriate.

¹ Jury Trials will be conducted in accordance with a separate *Jury Trial Operating Plan*.