

**IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
WITHIN AND FOR SWEETWATER COUNTY, WYOMING**

COVID-19 Operating Plan

General Order 2021-01

Courthouse: Sweetwater County Courthouse – Top Floor

Address: 80 West Flaming Gorge Way, Green River, Wyoming

Judges: Judge Richard L. Lavery

Judge Suzannah G. Robinson

FILED  
DISTRICT COURT  
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
SWEETWATER COUNTY WY

SEP 21 2021

DONNA LEE BOBAK  
CLERK OF COURT

BY

DEPUTY CLERK

**This Operating Plan does not include jury trials.**

This Operating Plan has been reviewed and approved by Wyoming State and Local Public Health Officials. The following measures will be implemented for all court proceedings and court business excepting jury trials.

- Scheduling

District court schedules are published on the Clerk of District Court's website.<sup>1</sup>

**All court proceedings shall be presumed to be held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS VIDEOCONFERENCING unless counsel or pro-se litigants are notified by the court, or a motion is made and the court grants the motion that the matter be held otherwise.**

All participants and individuals intending on observing court proceedings by video scheduled for hearings occurring by videoconference shall read and follow all guidelines given in Attachment A of this Order.

**All court proceedings held in person and for other matters held on the Top Floor of the Sweetwater County Courthouse are subject to the following ORDERS OF THE COURT:**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.sweet.wy.us/departments/clerk\\_of\\_district\\_court/district\\_court\\_schedule.php](https://www.sweet.wy.us/departments/clerk_of_district_court/district_court_schedule.php)

- Social Distancing

Notices will be posted that all individuals present on the Third Floor of the Sweetwater County Courthouse shall:

- Maintain social distance (six feet between persons not from the same household) at all times possible, including in hallways, lobbies, and courtrooms.

Seating in courtrooms will be marked with places to sit that are six feet apart. Courtroom access will be limited by courtroom capacity based on social distancing. Judges will be responsible for insuring social distancing in the courtrooms.

If courtroom capacity is exceeded, public, media, and all non-essential persons to a court hearing shall have access to public proceedings through video conferencing. In the event counsel or pro se litigants expect courtroom capacity to be exceeded, they shall notify the Court as soon as possible so the Court can provide video conferencing access.

Courtroom capacity in Courtroom 1 (Judge Robinson) is:

In the well (excepting security and court staff): 5

In the audience: 7

Courtroom capacity in Courtroom 2 (Judge Lavery) is:

In the well (excepting security and court staff): 12

In the audience: 20

Seating in hallways and lobbies will be separated to maintain proper social distance.

Hand sanitizer will be available in courtrooms and Clerk of District Court's offices.

Attorneys and parties will be expected to maintain proper social distance when possible. Counsel tables, the podium, etc. may be rearranged to allow for social distancing. Standards of courtroom decorum (standing or remaining seated, standing at the lectern) may be modified as each courtroom requires.

- Hygiene

Each courtroom will have a hand sanitizer dispenser and disinfecting wipes at counsel tables and courtroom entrance, if available. Hand sanitizer will also be available at security entrance and the Clerk of District Court's office(s).

Courtrooms will be cleaned before the start of the day and more frequently at the request of the District Judge if needed.

- Screening

It is the **RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL counsel**, officers of the court, employees working on the third floor of the Courthouse, and litigants to **NOTIFY THE COURT** at the earliest possible time if they, or another individual present or expected to be present for a court proceeding, has within the past 14 days tested positive for, is experiencing symptoms of, or been in close contact with another individual who has tested positive for or is presumed to be positive for COVID-19.

Notices will be posted that persons experiencing flu-like or known COVID-19 symptoms, have a fever, or are coughing or sneezing, may not enter the courthouse and must contact the Court and make arrangements to appear by video or teleconference as allowed by law, or contact the Clerk of District Court if the individual is attempting to reach the Clerk's office.

Court security or other employees as designated by the Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office will perform screening of all individuals entering through security.

All individuals entering through security shall be screened for COVID-19 symptoms.

There will be no waiting in line for security screening inside, unless social distancing can be maintained, except family members of the same household will be allowed to be screened together.

The following screening questions shall be asked:

- i. Are you experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty of breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea?

- ii. In the past 14 days, have you tested positive for, or been in close contact with someone who has tested positive or is presumptively positive for COVID-19?
- iii. If you answered yes to either of the above questions, are you fully vaccinated for COVID-19?

Persons who answer "yes" to any of the above questions will be denied courthouse access.

Persons who exhibit symptoms of illness potentially indicating COVID-19 infection will be denied courthouse access.

Court Security Deputies have the authority to deny access to persons who otherwise reasonably appear to present a health risk or fail or refuse to follow the directives for the safety measures set forth herein.

Those denied access will be provided information regarding the appropriate individual or entity to contact. If known, court security will notify the appropriate court if those denied access have a scheduled court appearance.

Court Security Deputies will set a protocol for the use of personal protective equipment while screening.

If Court Security or the Court deem necessary, individuals entering or who have already entered the court building may determine the temperature of an individual by use of a touchless/infrared thermometer. Individuals whose temperature equals or exceeds 100.0°F may be refused admittance to the court building.

Inmates being transported from the jail to the court building will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19. Inmates who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days, or are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms shall not be transported to the court building.

- **Vulnerable Populations**

Notices will be posted and provided with orders setting hearings and docket notices that individuals who are of a higher risk and who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19, such as individuals over age 65, individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those with compromised immune systems, such as those undergoing

chemotherapy should contact the court to identify themselves as vulnerable and receive accommodations.

- **Face Coverings**

**Because COVID-19 may be spread by persons who are asymptomatic or who have not yet become symptomatic, face coverings shall be required for all persons who enter the courthouse, including staff, elected officials, and court security. Unlike private businesses, litigants and other parties at the courthouse may not be present by choice, i.e. they are unable to choose not to enter. Face coverings are therefore appropriate to safeguard the health and safety of the general public.**

Attorneys, clients, witnesses in the witness stands, and other necessary courtroom persons located in front of the courtroom bar may be excepted from wearing a face covering, at the court's discretion, and may be dependent on local COVID-19 statistics and/or conditions. Permission for an exception must be requested and granted by the court prior to removing face coverings. If such exception is granted, social distancing shall be maintained at all times possible.

Notices will be posted at the entry of the courthouse that persons are required to wear face coverings for entry and at all times while in the courthouse, unless given an exception by the Court.

- a. A fabric face covering is appropriate. A surgical mask or N95 is not required.
- b. If a member of the public does not have a face covering, one will be provided for them at security.
- c. Court staff who enter the building other than through the public entrance do not have to wear a face covering upon entry.
- d. Court staff shall wear face coverings when in common or public spaces, such as service counters and courtrooms (**unless appropriate plexiglass or other protective barriers are present**); and in accordance with their office's respective policies.
- e. When using a cloth face covering, make sure:
- f. The mouth and nose are fully covered.

- g. The covering fits snugly against the sides of the face so there are no gaps.
  - h. You do not have any difficulty breathing while wearing the cloth face covering.
  - i. The cloth face covering can be tied or otherwise secured to prevent slipping.
  - j. Keep the covering on your face the entire time you are in public courthouse spaces.
- Cleaning

County facilities and maintenance staff will clean courtrooms before the start of the day and more frequently at the request of the District Judge if needed.

County facilities and maintenance staff will clean common areas (hallways, lobbies, bathrooms).

Public bathrooms shall remain stocked with soap. Hand sanitizer stations shall be near the exterior of public bathrooms so users may sanitize hands after touching doors. The public water fountain shall be unavailable for general use.

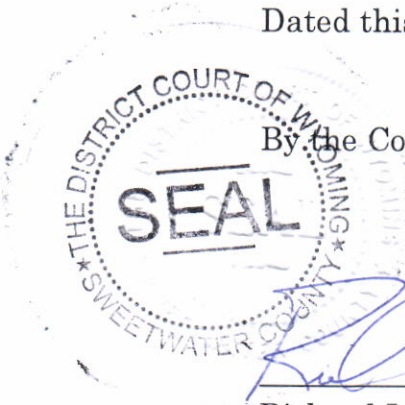
Court Security Deputies shall be responsible for regularly sanitizing security equipment and frequently touched surfaces.

**Signatures:**

Dated this 21<sup>st</sup> day of September, 2021.

By the Court

By the Court



*[Handwritten Signature]*  
 Richard L. Lavery  
 District Court Judge

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
 Suzannah G. Robinson  
 District Court Judge