

COVID-19 Municipal Court Operating Plan for the Village of Shorewood Hills

The Municipal Court for the Village of Shorewood Hills (“VOSH Municipal Court”) submits the following operating plan in compliance with the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s Order issued on May 22, 2020 (In re the Matter of the Extension of Orders and Interim Rule Concerning Continuation of Jury Trials, Suspension of Statutory Deadlines for Non-Criminal Jury Trials, and Remote Hearings during the COVID-19 Pandemic).

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the municipal courts, this municipal court will implement the following protective measures during Phase One, Two, and Three of the four phases described by the Final Report of the Chief Justice’s Wisconsin Courts COVID-19 Task Force:

- A. The VOSH Municipal Court has communicated with representatives of the municipality, clerk, and law enforcement about this operating plan and the protective measures that will be implemented for the safe resumption of in-person municipal court proceedings.
- B. The VOSH Municipal Court will favor remote appearances whenever possible and will use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely. All defendants will be given the opportunity to enter requests for continuance and pleas in writing using the court’s plea sheet, by mail, email, or facsimile. Defendants may also elect to enter pleas telephonically or by other electronic means, such as a videoconference. Public appearances will be shared publicly through electronic means, such as livestreaming.
- C. Pleas and payments may also be deposited in the Village of Shorewood Hills drop-box.
- D. Those defendants entering not guilty pleas may attend pre-trial conferences telephonically.
- E. When agreed upon by both parties, hearings and trials will be conducted using a videoconference platform. When videoconferencing is not an option for a defendant, reasonable requests for continuances will be treated generously, especially requests for continuances due to health concerns, including, but not limited to, a party having COVID-19, having been recently exposed to COVID-10, or being at risk for severe illness due to COVID-19.
- F. The VOSH Municipal Court will schedule any necessary in-person proceedings in a manner that provides an environment for physical distancing and mitigating the spread of COVID-19, as follows.
 - 1) Check-ins will be completed on a verbal basis.
 - 2) Everyone entering the courtroom will be asked COVID-19 specific questions in order to enter. Entry will be denied and a continuance will be provided to anyone who admits to an

active fever, cough, recent positive COVID-19 viral test, or known recent exposure to COVID-19.

- 3) No payments will be accepted during court appearances.
- 4) All persons who are present in the municipal courtroom shall wear a face covering at all times. Exceptions may be made only for a witness, if the court makes a finding on the record that it is necessary to remove the face covering for purposes of determining the credibility of the witness, or for health or disability accommodation concerns.
- 5) Disposable face coverings will be provided to all persons attending a court hearing who do not have one.
- 6) Hand sanitizer will be available upon entry and exit of the courtroom, for staff and counsel, and near any public restrooms.
- 7) Signage will be posted on the entrance to the municipal building and courtroom highlighting the precautions required as well as educational information concerning the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Signs will state face coverings are required to be worn at all times, social distancing must be maintained, and the use of hand sanitizer is encouraged.
- 8) Social distancing (maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet) will be strictly adhered to in the court room, court areas, and adjacent hallways. Attendance in the courtroom will be controlled and restricted. The maximum number of persons permitted in the courtroom has been determined and posted and is in compliance with any county regulations. The maximum capacity will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
- 9) Social distancing marks will be designated by tape on the floor.
- 10) Any seating will be arranged at least 6 feet apart. In the courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and clerk and bailiff seating will be arranged in such a way so there is a distance of at least 6 feet between each space.
- 11) Chairs, tables, door handles, and surfaces used in the court room will be wiped down with disinfectant cleaner between each appearance. Entrances to the courtroom and municipal building will also be disinfected on a regular basis.
- 12) Enhanced barriers will be in place where social distancing cannot be maintained, and where documents are to be exchanged or signatures needed.
- 13) No podium will be used by defendants or attorneys.
- 14) When appropriate, telephonic or videoconferencing technology will be used to enable participation or observation by those who cannot attend in person.
- 15) Over-flow defendants will maintain a distance of at least 6 feet in any large areas outside of the courtroom or will be directed to remain in their vehicle until summoned by court personnel or court officer.

G. The protective measures for in-person appearances as well as the process for entering a written plea will be posted on the municipal court website.

The municipal court will continue to follow this operating plan until further order by the chief judge.

Dated this 8th day of June, 2020.



Hon. Felice F. Borisy-Rudin
Municipal Judge
Village of Shorewood Hills Municipal Court