

21st Judicial Circuit of Missouri - St. Louis County

Velda Village Hills Municipal Division

Continuity of Operations Plan

Presiding Judge Danelle Carter Duffy

Provisional Judge Jennifer H. Fisher

Court Administrator Patricia Whitted

3501 Avondale Avenue

Velda Village Hills, Missouri 63121

Office: (314) 261-7221

Facsimile: (314) 261-7225

Website: Veldavillagehills.us

Email: Veldavillagecourtpat@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Velda Village Hills Municipal Division, St. Louis County Circuit Court in its Continuity of Operations Planning (hereinafter COOP), is to utilize all available resources to maximize contribution to the overall continuity of operations response effort while assuring essential functions.

The Velda Village Hills Municipal Division is responsible for the court operations and all municipal proceedings in the City of Velda Village Hills, Missouri.

It is imperative to the operation of this division that all citizens and employees who enter the courthouse and court facilities feel confident in their own safety and understand that the health and welfare of all persons involved in court proceedings and business is paramount.

Following emergencies, disaster or other events; deliberate, accidental or resulting from natural events, the Velda Village Hills Municipal Division is responsible for providing the specific essential functions recognized under this plan.

Purpose of COOP

The purpose of the Continuity of Operations Plan, (COOP), is to establish policy and guidance to ensure that essential municipal division functions are continued in the event of a man-made, natural, technological or other emergency that disrupt or threaten to disrupt normal operations. The COOP enables the division to operate with a significantly reduced workforce and diminished availability of resources as well as to operate from an alternate worksite should the court facility become unavailable or uninhabitable.

COOP should be activated under the following circumstances:

1. An incident occurs requiring relocation of any essential functions (building compromised, etc.).
2. Essential functions are significantly compromised.
3. Staffing levels are significantly compromised due to crisis (pandemic, etc.).
4. Key partners are not available for normal operations.
5. Essential systems are not available (power/water, etc.).

COOP does not apply to temporary disruptions of service during which services are anticipated to be restored within a short period of time.

This operation plan serves as our guide to adhere to the Supreme Court Operational Directives for Municipal Divisions as mandated by Judge Michael Burton, St. Louis County Circuit Court Presiding Judge; in response to the COVID-19 Health Pandemic. As per Administrative Order #30 and all prior court operating orders this COOP provides for the health and safety of all during this pandemic.

1. There are four phases; all Courts in Missouri including St. Louis County Municipal Divisions are in phase zero as instructed by Judge Burton. The Missouri Supreme Court has issued Directives for each operating Phase reflecting differing approaches to in person proceedings, personnel, staffing and courthouse operations.
2. As the Judge for the Division prior to resuming in-person hearings, I will certify that the Presiding Judge of St. Louis County has moved St. Louis County Courts to Operating Phase Three.
3. The Division will permit vulnerable judicial employees to return to work but supervisors shall make reasonable accommodations to address those vulnerabilities. The Division will insist that judicial employees stay home if they a) are subject to a quarantine or isolation order or are living with or caring for such an individual; b) have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine or are living with or caring for an individual who has been advised to self-quarantine; c) are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking medical treatment or are living with or caring for such an individual.
4. The Division will comply with all CDC/Department of Public Health directives relating to quarantining and contact tracing whenever COVID is detected.

It is strongly recommended that City Administration direct the Police Department to prepare their own COOP.

Collectively during all phases, the following will occur:

- ALL Visitors will receive a temperature check and health screening for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entry.
- PPE will be required for all staff, employees, and anyone entering the court building.
- Social distancing of 6 feet will be enforced non-essential individuals will not be granted entry due to space limitations.
- Court Proceedings will be conducted remotely via WEBEX Conferencing; The Division will continue to make accommodations to vulnerable litigants, witnesses, victims, attorneys and other individuals involved in court proceedings to participate in the proceedings remotely or postpone their required presence at the court facility.

Phase Zero (current phase)

- In person proceedings suspended for Municipal Divisions to Minimize activity in courthouse to further help combat COVID-19 Municipal Division will operate at full capacity for daily operations the Presiding Judge may cancel warrants upon motion from counsel and/or defendant.
- Procedures have been established to address cancelled court dates and rescheduled court dates. This includes communicating with counsel and defendants via telephone, facsimile, email and web site.
- Approval must be obtained by Judge Burton to proceed to next phase

Phase One

- Upon approval from the Presiding Judge move forward to Phase One. Continue to consult with Presiding Judge and other local Judicial partners while relying on local health officials (COVID-19 TASK FORCE) and CDC to mirror court operational decisions consistent with local health conditions. Any spike in cases may result in delayed issuance of approval to next phase.
- Continue to update COVID-19 Notices accordingly and update local orders as deemed necessary.
- Social distancing strongly enforced limit to 10 per gathering whenever possible. Utilize all technologies available to which include teleconferencing and video conferencing (WEBEX).
- Plan for additional dockets to accommodate the teleconference and video conferencing efforts.

Phase Two

- Obtain approval from Presiding Judge to move forward to Phase Two. Continued communications with Presiding Judge and local judiciary partners while relying on guidance from the local health officials (COVID-19 TASK FORCE) and CDC to adjust and adhere to court operating decisions to local health conditions.
- Update COVID-19 notices as applicable and adhere to any local court order updates as deemed necessary. Social distancing strongly enforced; continue to limit gathering to 10 or less.
- Continue with remote proceedings (WEBEX).
- Prepare for approval from Presiding Judge. Meet with court staff, police chief and bailiffs to discuss additional duties and responsibilities as well as prepare to resume in person court proceedings.

Phase Three

- Obtain approval of Presiding Judge to resume in person court proceedings.
- Continued communication with local health officials (COVID-19 TASK FORCE) to adjust and adhere to court operating decisions to mirror local health conditions.
- Signs displayed that read MASK REQUIRED for entry into court room.
- Adhere to local health and CDC guidelines for social distancing during court proceeding.
- Health screening to include questionnaire and temperature check. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be permitted into the court room.
- Limit ½ of capacity, which includes Bailiffs, Judge, Court Administrator, Defendants, Attorneys and Prosecutor.
- Limit court access to essential persons only.

- Prominently display signage at entry of TVB, website, and all building access points regarding safety/sanitizing procedures being utilized. Hand Sanitizer available and frequent sanitation of seats and other court equipment after each use.

I. Velda Village Hills Municipal Division's plan to ensure social distancing is enforced to help protect the public and court personnel per guidelines provided by Centers for Disease Control will be as follows:

- We will provide hand sanitizers at each point of entry; post signage and Administrative orders relating to COVID-19 and CDC guidelines.
- The division will have signage posted mandating "MASKS OR FACE COVERING REQUIRED", no one will be allowed to enter the building or the court room without a MASK OR FACE COVERING.
- The Court building will be marked to indicate 6ft for social distancing measures. The building will be sanitized several times a day to include doorknobs, traffic violation bureau windows, public computer, credit card devices, chairs and tables.

II. Ensuring Full Compliance with the Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control to help combat COVID-19, which includes providing PPE for staff and defendants, and disinfecting frequently utilized surfaces and other public areas.

- Staff and visitors will be screened prior to entry in the building and court room to include questionnaire and temperature check (anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be allowed to enter the court room).
- During in person court sessions sanitizing chairs, tables and all other surfaces after each person exits the court room.

- Allowing only one way to enter and exit court except for emergencies.
- In person court sessions will be conducted using staggered times; prepare timed entry numbers for in person court sessions.

Orders of Succession and Delegation of Authorities

Key Position- Judge — Successor-Honorable Judge Danelle Carter Duffy- Delegated Authority - All

Key Position- Provisional Judge- Successor- Jennifer H. Fisher- Delegated Authority- All

Key Position- Court Administrator- Patricia Whitted - Delegated Authority — All with direction from Presiding Judge for the Municipal Division.

Documentation of Authority for all listed above — Velda Village Hills Municipal Division Court Operating Order.

Essential Functions

Warrant cancellation- essential function Y -Judicial Order- Court Administrator and court staff.

Responding to Motions and other filings with the court essential function Y Judicial Order — Court Administrator and court staff.

Processing Mail- essential function Y — Judicial Order- Court staff.

Case continuations- essential function Y- Court Order — Court staff.

Customer Service— essential function Y Court Order-Court Administrator and court staff.

State reporting — non- essential function N — Court Administrator.

Check printing — non-essential function N- Court Administrator.

Payment Processing- non-essential function N- can be deferred- Court staff.

Bond processing-non- essential function N- statutory requirement — Court Administrator, can be deferred.

Prioritize Essential functions

Warrant Cancellations —	Daily	Priority level I
Responding to Motion filing-	Daily	Priority level I
Processing mail-	Daily	Priority level I
Customer Service-related functions-	Daily	Priority level I
Case Continuation-	Daily	Priority level 2
State reporting-	Monthly-	Priority level 2
Bond Processing-	Daily	Priority level 2

Essential Staff Function

Judge Available 24 hours day to address court matters.

Provisional Judge in the event the Judge is not available.

Court Administrator manage daily operations ensure division performs in the most efficient and professional manner.

Staff Calling Tree

Court Administrator -contacts Judge-Prosecutor-Court Staff-City Manager.

Deputy Court Administrator Contacts Judge-Prosecutor-Court Staff-City Manager in the event Court Administrator is unavailable.

External contacts- OSCA and REJIS.

Essential Items in Event of Building Evacuation

Three laptops

Vital court documents to be secured in safe if possible

Court files upstairs and inside the court department in order of priority. The files are backed up offsite.

Vendors:

IT backup- Backup to network storage device REJIS.

Backup off site for court files (REJIS facility).

OSCA- Backup offsite for court files (STATE).

Alternative court operations

In the event offsite operations are required, City of Velda Village Hills will secure an alternate site be utilized for court operation.

- WebEx will be utilized for virtual court sessions. The division anticipates having a minimum 1 docket per month.
- Communicate other available options including online payment to pre dispose of traffic violation bureau fines without a court appearance.
- Public access to computer to pay online or sign in for available court dockets to address violations in court.

RESUMING IN PERSON Court proceedings:

- Defendants will enter the court building at entrance and go through security checkpoint and health questionnaire.
- All parties will be screened prior to entering the court building, anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be allowed into the court room. Bailiff shall provide this information to the court clerks at the TVB window so a continuance can be given for a later date.
- Due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements no more than 9 litigants will be allowed in the court room at one time (see picture below for court room setup with social distancing)
- Defendants will only be allowed to enter and exit the court room one way
- Non-essential parties will not be granted access due to space limitations.
- Signs will be displayed throughout the building and court room advising visitors of COVID-19 requirements
 - Court date notices will include COVID-19 policies and procedures. Defendants will gain admittance on first come first serve basis at staggered times.

Summary of appearance in court for Defendants

- Defendants will enter the court building at entrance and go through security checkpoint and health questionnaire.
- All parties will be screened prior to entering the court building, anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be allowed into the court room.
- Defendants will be seen on first come first served basis.
- Each defendant will appear before the Judge, for arraignment and plea.

- For plea of guilty backing sheet will reflect the plea information and fines and costs if applicable; it will also be entered via e-bench.
- Defendant will be granted a minimum of 60 days to pay in full; an appearance will not be required if they pay in full by the court date.
- If the defendant needs additional time, they are required to appear in court on their scheduled docket to request more time to pay or alternative means if they cannot make their payment.
- If the defendant enters a not guilty plea or in cases of compliance defendant will be directed to PA
- Defendants referred to PA will remain in their seat until called by the PA.
- Attorneys that enter the court room will wait in the Attorney Only chairs. Social distancing will be enforced.
 - Defendants will receive trial setting memorandum.
 - Defendants will receive a continuance order signed by the Judge each time they appear for court.



ENTRY ONLY



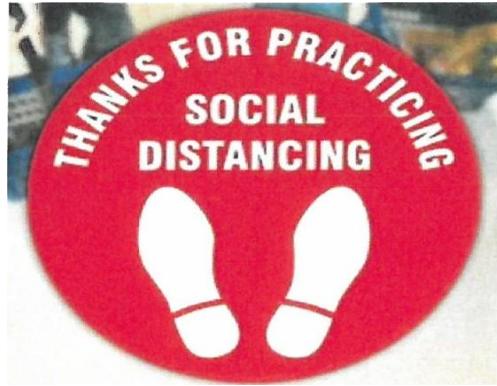
Security checkpoint and health screening area

Prior to entry into the court room each person will be screened for weapons. They will undergo a temperature check for health screening.



Social distancing court room setup. Nine (9) Defendants per interval

All surfaces will be sanitized throughout the court session.



The court room will be marked for social distancing so each person that enters will be aware of where they need to stand and interact for court proceedings.



Judge bench view of court room setup



Traffic Violations Bureau

Payment processing, case inquiry and other motions or filings are handled at the TVB during normal business hours as well as during court proceedings. All external surfaces will be sanitized after each visitor.

Signage will be displayed advising all visitors that MASKS or FACE COVERINGS are Required to enter the building and court room



The above sign will be posted at the TVB window and the side entry doors for court.



Exit door outside view. All defendants and visitors will use for exiting court proceedings.

The defendant will exit the court room after speaking with the Judge unless they are directed to make a payment. If they are directed to make a payment, they will proceed out of the court room to the traffic violations bureau to make their payment and exit using the far-left door in the court room. The defendant will receive all pertinent information for their case prior to leaving the court room. Defendants will not be allowed to exit at entry door. No re-entry through exit door will be allowed.



Inside view of exit door for court.

Bonds and Warrant processing:

Until further notice, all Defendants shall be released upon their own recognizance regardless of the stated bond amount, unless, in the opinion of law enforcement and/or the prosecutor, it is determined that an individual should not be released as they pose a threat to the public, a victim or themselves, in which case the Municipal Judge shall be contacted immediately to determine any conditions for release.

In the event a defendant is detained because of an existing warrant, law enforcement may issue a summons with a new court date without taking the defendant into custody/booking and said issuance of a summons and new court date shall constitute the execution of the warrant. The Defendant shall be released upon their own recognizance and law enforcement shall immediately notify the Court, whereupon the Court Administrator shall update the Court's records.