

United States District Court
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
SHERMAN DIVISION

DIVISIONAL STANDING ORDER NO. 2020-1

The Paul Brown United States Courthouse in Sherman, Texas, the United States Courthouse in Plano, Texas, and the United States Courthouse Annex in Sherman, Texas (the Sherman Division Courthouses), are public buildings in which the public is welcome. Unfortunately, because of the Coronavirus pandemic, operations at the Sherman Division Courthouses have been reduced over the past weeks. Most hearings have been conducted by phone or video conference, physical access to the courthouses has been limited, and jury trials have been postponed. This has the potential to conflict with the constitutional right to a trial by jury. Congress has expressed its clear intent that litigants must be afforded a prompt resolution of disputes, consistent with the requirements of the Constitution and statutory law. In criminal cases, while limited exceptions are permitted, the Speedy Trial Act sets deadlines for, and requires that priority be given to, providing a prompt and fair trial for each defendant charged with a criminal offense. Another important consideration is, with very limited exceptions such as cases involving minors, protection of the right of public access to court proceedings, especially criminal trials.

The Court has carefully considered all of these factors in balancing the rights of criminal defendants to a speedy and fair trial by jury, the rights of civil litigants to a prompt and fair resolution of disputes, the right of the public to “open courts,” and the safety of court staff, jurors, witnesses, parties, observers, and counsel.

It is therefore **ORDERED**, effective June 1, 2020, at 12:01 a.m., for the protection of court staff, litigants, attorneys, and observers, the following persons shall not enter the Sherman Division Courthouses absent a specific order from the Court:

1. Any person who has traveled to any of the following countries within the preceding 14 days:
People's Republic of China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Brazil, or Western Europe;
2. Any person who has resided with, or has had close contact with, someone who has traveled to one of the countries listed above within the preceding 14 days;
3. Any person who is currently under the direction of a licensed healthcare professional or public health agency to self-quarantine;
4. Any person who has been diagnosed by a licensed healthcare provider as having COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 by a source authorized by any State, and who has not obtained written verification from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, hospital, or public health agency professional that he or she is currently not contagious;
5. Any person who lives with, or cares for, a person described in category 3 or 4 above; or
6. Any person who presents currently having a fever, chills, persistent cough, shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, nausea, or loss of the sense of taste or smell.

It is further **ORDERED** that any person seeking entry to the Sherman Division Courthouses at any time will be asked by a Court Security Officer (CSO) or a member of the court staff to confirm that none of the exclusions listed above applies to that person.

It is further **ORDERED** that each person, except a witness while testifying, and an attorney while examining a witness or making a statement to a jury, must wear an appropriate face mask or covering while inside the Sherman Division Courthouses, unless excused from this requirement by a judge, CSO, or a member of the court staff. Witnesses shall testify unmasked, and attorneys may speak unmasked, while maintaining social distance. Persons other than jurors must supply their

own mask or face covering. Each person in the courthouses must follow the instructions of the court staff and CSOs to aid in maintaining distance in the courthouses.

It is further **ORDERED** that all CSOs, following substantive guidance provided by this Order and administrative guidance from the United States Marshal for the Eastern District of Texas, shall deny entry to anyone attempting to enter, or remain in, the Sherman Division Courthouses in violation of these protocols. In the event of any uncertainty as to whether a person should be denied entrance to the courthouses, the CSOs shall immediately contact the U.S. Marshal or the designated Deputy Marshal for a determination, which shall control.

It is further **ORDERED** that, unless extended by subsequent order, these restrictions shall remain in place until June 30, 2020, at 11:59 p.m., when they shall automatically expire.

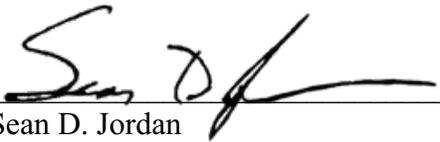
So **ORDERED** and **SIGNED**, June 1, 2020.



Amos L. Mazzant, III
U.S. District Judge



Richard A. Schell
U.S. District Judge



Sean D. Jordan
U.S. District Judge