

# Memo

**To:** Chief Burr  
**From:** Lt. Detective Jason Legleiter #104  
**CC:**  
**Date:** 05-04-2023  
**Reference:** Municipal Court Safety

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Chief Burr,

This memo is to address security issues at the Arkansas City Municipal court and more broadly City Hall which houses Municipal court. As you are aware the Municipal court is set to run each Tuesday from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.. In speaking with the court clerk, she advised that individuals who need to be seen in court take a number and wait to be called upon. I was told that individuals can wait in the court room, however we know that at time individuals who are awaiting Municipal Court stand in the main hallway.

When evaluating the overall safety of Municipal Court and those employed by the City of Arkansas City, we see glaring issues. The most noticeable is the overall lack of physical security, meaning there is not an officer present inside or outside the courtroom. This creates the possibility of any type of violence against not only Municipal court staff, but City Hall staff or others attending court. Normally on a Tuesday during the current set times for court there could be up to 11 Police Officers on duty, with the possibility of 5 at the Police Station, this considers the Police Administrative staff and the Investigations division. The reason this is important to note is if an incident took place, we could not prevent it however the response time to stop this event or capture the suspect would be very minimum compared to a night shift response when at most 4 officers are on duty covering the entire town of 12,000.

Other obvious security issues are the lack of security video, or metal detectors upon entering City Hall. This then leads to the next security issue there are currently 3 entrances to City Hall. The main South door, the West door, and the Elevator, which we must provide to be compliant with ADA laws. The West door opens to a set of stairs which accesses the main level where court is held, however one could elect to not go up the stairs and instead go towards the location where

EOC, Human Resources, Project Management and IT is located. This area is not secured and accessible by any citizen of Arkansas City. As you can image this presents major safety concerns but not physical safety, safety of personal private records (HR), access to the city early warning systems (EOC), records on major city projects and lastly and most importantly the network security for the City as the servers and network equipment is housed in this area. Also housed in this area are multiple years of records for the city, this is in a location which should be secured however there are times in which the door is propped open allowing easy access into a sensitive area with little if no oversight even during normal business hours.

On the main level where the Municipal Court is located, also houses the City Manager and Finance department. Individuals who have handled their matters in court or who simply received a citation which can be paid without a court appearance, must enter the finance department area to make this payment. I was told that the doors to this area are locked after 5 p.m., however the doors to access this area have large glass windows, and there are no other security measures in place, no audible alarms, motion sensor or cameras. This could allow an individual who gained access to have access to City Financial information, even if it were on a computer system in this area.

In addressing the entrance to the elevator this is located on the northwest corner of the City Hall building. In entering this area, individuals immediately see a glass door which behind are District Court records, this presents yet another privacy security situation. Once an individual access the elevator, they can choose the 1<sup>st</sup> floor (Main floor) or the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor where District Court is house. Once on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor an individual can access the district court. During a day in which court is held in person there is an armed Cowley County Sheriff Deputy present in the court room. Also on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is the City Code and Planning department.

To increase the safety of staff and individuals at Municipal Court and City Hall some immediate steps could be taken.

1. Securing the West door, only access would be the front door (South) or the elevator.
2. Installation of security cameras so that individual's movements could be monitored, and this could deter individuals from being in areas they should not be.
3. Creating a secured area where EOC, HR, Project Management and IT are located. This would be accessible by key card or key lock (punch code) only. This would take changing the glass door on the east access by IT to a solid fireproof door and then securing the west entrance once inside the waiting room area.

A long-term solution to improve the overall security would be a joint building encompassing the Municipal Court and the Police Department. This would reduce individuals roaming throughout City Hall which reducing traffic and availability to identified sensitive areas. This would also allow for easier access to assistance, creating a deterrent. In combining the two at one centralized location it could streamline the process from court to payment to fingerprinting etc.