

TRAVIS COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 1
RULES FOR REMOTE HEARINGS

The Governor has declared a state of emergency and the Office of Court Administration (OCA) has suggested that all non-critical court proceedings should be suspended. However, technology and state law allows options not previously available. As such, Travis County Court at Law No. 1 will continue to conduct hearings if the parties have the technology and desire to do so and the Court agrees that the matter is appropriate to hear virtually. The following restrictions and limitations will apply but should be similar to what is required for in person hearing. Any requests for a virtual courtroom hearing will be considered, but it is required that all parties agree in writing to a virtual hearing, and it is ultimately the Court's discretion whether to set the matter.

PROCEDURES FOR LITIGANTS

Travis County Court at Law No. 1 will be using Zoom videoconferencing. It is free to download at zoom.us or you can download the app directly to your cell phone. The Judicial Executive Assistant will email you a link to the hearing. Your computer must have internet access, a video camera and a headset with microphone. If you can only participate via telephone, please notify court staff. Prior to your hearing, test your connection and setup with Zoom via a test meeting at <https://zoom.us/test>. During the hearing, participants must speak one at a time and pause prior to speaking in case there is any audio/video lag. Participants shall mute themselves when not speaking in order to avoid any potential background noise.

Once a hearing is scheduled, ensure the Court Reporter (Cathy.Mata@traviscountytexas.gov) and Judicial Executive Assistant (Catherine.Jones@traviscountytexas.gov) have your email address no later than 72 hours before the hearing. The Court will email hearing participants a link to the hearing and to "Box," a program that the parties will use to upload any exhibits they intend to offer during the hearing.

Exhibits must be uploaded to "Box" as well as emailed to opposing counsel and the court's staff attorney (Lea.DowneyGallatin@traviscountytexas.gov) no later than 48 hours before the hearing. The subject line of the email should be the Full Cause No., scheduled hearing date and time and Plaintiff's Exhibits/Defendant's Exhibits. The documents must be in PDF format.

The Court cannot consider any exhibits not uploaded to "Box" in a timely manner. If you fail to follow this requirement, the judge and court reporter will not be able to enter these documents into the record and consequently the Court will cancel your hearing.

Any responses or replies e-filed with the Clerk less than 48 hours before the hearing, should be emailed in PDF format to the staff attorney and judicial executive assistant. Both email and e-filing are required as email is not a substitute for e-filing with the Clerk as usual. Cases for the judge's reference need not be e-filed with the Clerk but should be emailed to the

staff attorney at least 4 hours before the hearing to allow consideration. Documents which have been e-filed and accepted need not be refiled with the Clerk.

WEAR APPROPRIATE DRESS

Although the Meeting is Virtual, the Court expects participants to dress appropriately. Attorneys are expected to wear business attire while others may dress business casual.

FOR THE PUBLIC

THE OPEN COURTS PROVISION OF TEXAS LAW ALLOWS ALL TEXANS ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS. THE PUBLIC MAY VIEW OR LISTEN TO PROCEEDINGS BUT VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING IS PROHIBITED. HEARINGS, UNLESS SEALED, WILL BE BROADCAST VIA THE COURT'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL AT: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWOYoEETU_grm1LaLaCnH2w.