

RULES/INSTRUCTIONS FOR ZOOM HEARINGS IN THE 303RD DISTRICT COURT

Zoom hearings are Court hearings. Usual courtroom decorum and dress should be observed.

FOR THE PUBLIC:

THE OPEN COURTS PROVISION OF TEXAS LAW ALLOWS THE PUBLIC ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS. ALL REMOTE PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED BY THE 303rd DISTRICT COURT ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND ARE LIVE STREAMED TO THE COURT'S YOUTUBE CHANNELS. YOU MAY OBTAIN THE CHANNELS FROM THE COURT COORDINATOR.

STREAMED PROCEEDINGS ARE LIVE ONLY AND NOT SAVED OR MADE AVAILABLE FOR LATER VIEWING. ANY RECORDING OF THE HEARINGS BY AUDIO OR VIDEO, BY ANY PARTY, ATTORNEY, WITNESS, OR THIRD PARTY IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

ELECTRONIC PROTOCOL

Prior to the proceedings, email your contact information (phone and email) to the court coordinator (barbara.esquivel@dallascounty.org). If the proceedings are disrupted for any reason, this is the information that the court will use to contact participants with instructions about how to resume the proceeding. Subject line shall state: "ZOOM CONTACT INFORMATION: (Case Name); (Case number)"

If an attorney, party or witness does not have a video device to participate, that party may appear telephonically, with 24 hour written notice to other participants and to the court.

Disable or silence notifications from all electronic devices.

Each participant shall have their own device to participate in the proceedings. Participants should not attempt to share a device. Each participant should be in a separate room. •

Prepare and practice ahead of time. If you haven't used Zoom before, practice to learn the settings, microphones, and video functions. If you wait until your hearing to familiarize yourself with the settings, you will likely waste time needed to present and the court to consider your evidence.

Participants may use headphones with attached microphones to participate in the proceedings.

Use other mobile devices sparingly if your wi-if service is limited. Use of multiple devices or a VPN affect the quality of the signal for the device you use to appear for the hearing.

WITNESSES

WITNESSES MAY NOT OBSERVE COURTROOM PROCEEDINGS UNTIL GIVEN SPECIFIC COURT AUTHORIZATION TO DO SO. All witnesses in all Zoom hearings are placed under the rule on the court's own motion.

Witnesses shall participate under a user name that allows the court to identify them by their name.

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Witnesses called to testify should be given the link to participate in the proceedings. They will be placed in a virtual waiting room. The court will allow them to enter proceedings as they are called to testify.

Each party is responsible for securing their witnesses participation.

Private chat functions will be disabled during the proceeding, unless enabled by the judge for publishing exhibits (see below). If for some reason the chat function is otherwise enable, be aware that all chats may be visible to all participants.

Witnesses shall testify from memory only, unless they are reviewing an exhibit as directed by the court in the usual course of the proceeding.

Witnesses may not receive any kind of assistance, digital or otherwise, while they are testifying.

Witnesses may not consult notes or documents while testifying without 24 hour prior written disclosure to all attorneys/parties of what they intend to consult.

If a witness has another person in the room with them while they are participating, they shall disclose any other person who is present with them prior to testifying.

EXHIBITS

Exhibits shall be formatted as a PDF, JPEG, or MP4. Parties shall confer with each other in advance of the hearing and determine whether they agree on the admissibility of any exhibits.

For Hearings before Judge Garcia: Parties shall submit a **list** of agreed exhibits to the reporter (donna.west-kindle@dallascounty.org) 24 hours in advance of the hearing. Subject line shall state: "AGREED EXHIBIT LIST: (Case name); (case number)". All exhibits shall be emailed to the court reporter (donna.west-kindle@dallascounty.org), and the opposing party 24 hours in advance of the hearing. Failure to email exhibits timely will result in the exhibits not being considered.

For hearings before Judge Olvera: Parties shall submit a **list** of agreed exhibits to Judge Olvera (Graciela.Olvera@dallascounty.org) 24 hours in advance of the hearing. Subject line shall state: "AGREED EXHIBIT LIST: (Case name); (case number)". All exhibits shall be emailed to Judge Olvera (graciela.Olvera@dallascounty.org) and to the opposing party no later than noon the day before the hearing. Subject line shall state: "(PARTY)'s EXHIBITS: (Case name); (case number)"

Your email to Judge Olvera and the court reporter may not contain any ex parte information or it will be rejected.

If the files cannot be emailed (due to technical difficulties or size restriction), the court will provide another way for the exhibits to be exchanged.

Request permission from the court to publish an exhibit using zoom's chat function.

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OBJECTIONS, SPEAKING AND INTERRUPTING

Only one person may speak at a time.

Give a visual signal (such as raising your hand) prior to objecting or speaking. Once someone has given the signal, all participants shall stop talking until the court recognizes a speaker. This is similar to standing prior to speaking in the courtroom.

Refrain from interrupting another participant until the statement being made is fully completed, except when necessary to protect a party's rights on the record. Respectfully await the completion of the Court's statement or opinion before pointing out objectionable matter.

Do not talk or make noises during the proceedings unless talking is during the proper participation in the proceeding.

No more than two attorneys per side may participate in the proceeding; however, only one attorney may examine a witness at a time, and only one attorney may argue a particular point at a time.

APPEARANCE AND DECORUM FOR HEARINGS

Be prompt to the session.

Stand or sit for the proceedings.

Dress in keeping with proper courtroom decorum and rely on common sense and good taste in selecting appropriate attire.

Do not engage in unrelated activities during the proceedings.

Do not eat or chew gum during proceedings.

Upon entering the proceeding, do not leave without first obtaining permission, or as appropriate upon recess.

Do not disrupt the proceedings by facial expression, nonverbal gesture, guttural utterances, or any other conduct.

Attorneys shall advise their clients and witnesses of proper courtroom decorum and attire.