

COUNTY COURT AT LAW #1
STANDING ORDER FOR INTERNET (ZOOM) VIDEO CONFERENCE
HEARINGS

(Updated January 31, 2023)

The Supreme Court has issued emergency orders which continue to encourage “virtual/remote” hearings when possible. Technology and state law allow options not previously available to handle these essential proceedings safely. As such, County Court at Law #1 will allow litigants to use “virtual/remote” for certain uncontested hearing, certain announcements, and for plea bargain agreements under certain circumstances.

PROCEDURES FOR ATTORNEYS AND LITIGANTS FOR REMOTE ACCESS HEARINGS:

DEFENSE COUNSEL MUST CONTACT THE COURT COORDINATOR
24-HOURS IN ADVANCE OF HEARING DATE TO REQUEST A ZOOM
HEARING.

ZOOM is free to download to your computer/laptop/tablet at ZOOM.us or you can download the app directly to your cell phone. **The ZOOM link and specific hearing credentials for the case or docket will be posted to the Courts website at least 72 hours before the hearing:**

[https://www.mctx.org/departments/departments_a -
c/county_courts/county_court_at_law_1/index.php](https://www.mctx.org/departments/departments_a - c/county_courts/county_court_at_law_1/index.php)

Your computer must have internet access, a video camera, and speaker/microphone or headset with a microphone.

EXHIBITS.

The court will post the link to the Court’s website at no more than 72 hours or no less than 48 hours prior to the hearing. If you intend to offer any exhibits during the hearing you must email the pre-marked exhibits to all parties and the Court Reporter no later than 3:00 p.m. the day before the hearing. The subject line of the email must contain the full cause number and “State’s Exhibits” or “Defense’s Exhibits” as applicable. The exhibits must be in .pdf format. The Court cannot consider any exhibits not emailed to the Court Reporter in a timely manner or in a correct format. If you fail to follow this requirement the Court Reporter will not maintain these documents in the record.

In addition to sending the exhibits to the court reporter, you must have your

exhibits in digital format and be prepared to “screen share” the exhibits with the Court at the time the exhibit is admitted into evidence. Attorneys should provide a copy of all exhibits to the opposing counsel/party prior to the commencement of the hearing. Proffering attorneys must ensure that the exhibits are available to any witness needed to lay a predicate for admissibility.

PLEA BARGAIN PAPERWORK

Completed **ORIGINAL** plea bargain paperwork signed by the State, the accused citizen, and the Defense attorney must be sent to the Court before a zoom plea can occur. Any missing information, to include signatures and fingerprints, will void the ability to plea the case via zoom unless specifically granted by the presiding judge.

ZOOM COURT DECORUM. The standard rules concerning proper court decorum, demeanor and dress code apply to all on-line hearings. Parties and litigants shall ensure that there will be no disruptions or disturbances from their site and that there are no minor children within the hearing of the court session unless expressly approved by the Court. The Court will not permit any party to appear from a moving vehicle or from a location not appropriate for court proceedings. The court room is not a beach, a baseball field, or a cafe, and especially not a place for cats or other filtered characters. No backgrounds will be allowed except for live backgrounds, blacked out backgrounds or blurred background. Also, please ensure there are no nicknames for attorneys or for defendants.

TECHNOLOGY FAILURES:

Zoom is not a perfect system and many technological issues can occur when performing a zoom docket. If it becomes impossible to have a zoom hearing, the court will send defense counsel a reset.

FOR THE PUBLIC:

THE OPEN COURTS PROVISION OF TEXAS LAW ALLOWS ALL TEXANS ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS. AS SUCH, “VIRTUAL/REMOTE” HEARINGS WILL OCCUR WHEN THE COURTROOM IS OPEN AND IN SESSION. THIS WILL ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR A COURT YOUTUBE CHANNEL AND THE COURT WILL FOLLOW ITS POLICY OF VIDEO AND AUDION RECORDING. IN SHORT, **VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING IS PROHIBITED.**