

**STANDING ORDER REGARDING VIRTUAL HEARINGS**  
**FOR THE 457<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT COURT**  
**REGARDING HEARINGS DURING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY**

ALL Jury Trials, Oral hearings and Bench trials will be conducted in-person. Hearings Via Zoom will be considered consistent with exigent circumstances per the most recent Emergency Order after filing a motion. Otherwise, all hearings moving forward will be in person.

**PROCEDURES FOR ATTORNEYS AND LITIGANTS:**

The 457<sup>th</sup> District Court will be using Zoom video conferencing. It is free to download at zoom.us or you can download the app directly to your cell phone. The Court Reporter or Court Administrator will email you a link to the hearing.

Zoom virtual hearings shall commence with the same professional decorum as in-person hearings. As such:

- (1) Attorneys and litigants must dress in proper/formal courtroom attire.
- (2) Attorneys must have proper technology that is compatible with Zoom, including: computers, tablets, or smartphones with *functioning* internet access, video camera, and microphone.
- (3) If Attorneys intend on calling witnesses, the Attorneys must ensure witnesses have the proper technology referenced in (2) above, even if it means that witness testifies from sponsoring Attorney's location.
- (4) All participants, including Attorneys, litigants, and witnesses must test all equipment prior to hearing to make sure it is functioning properly<sup>1</sup>. This test should include knowing how to mute audio, turnoff camera, and share documents via Zoom (as if tendering and publishing an exhibit during in-person hearings).
- (5) The Court will treat witnesses without proper, functioning equipment/technology the same as if the witness failed to appear at an in-person hearing when called to testify (having the option to refuse the testimony from that witness under T.R.E. 611).
- (6) Attorneys, litigants, witnesses, and others attending the hearing must have technology in a room free from distractions and interference.

Ensure the Court Reporter (lorri.lucas@mctx.org) and Court Administrator (pj.miller@mctx.org) have your email address by no later than 3:00 p.m. the day before any hearing.

If you intend to offer any exhibits during the hearing you need to email them to all parties, the Court Reporter, and the Court Administrator by no later than 3:00 p.m. the day before the hearing. The subject of the email should be the full cause number and "Plaintiff Exhibits" or "Defendant Exhibits" as applicable. The documents must be in .pdf format. *All digital exhibits provided to the Court Reporter shall be no larger than 100MB per exhibit and labeled with Exhibit number or letter only (DO NOT DESCRIBE EXHIBIT)*. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> If failure occurs during the hearing after a successful test, call Court Admin and Court will consider receiving testimony via telephone.

**FOR THE PUBLIC:**

THE OPEN COURTS PROVISION OF TEXAS LAW ALLOWS ALL TEXANS ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS. AS SUCH, ANYONE MAY CALL THE COURT (936-538-3697) TO GET ACCESS CODES TO HEARINGS. IF YOU ARE VIEWING AS A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, YOU MUST MUTE YOUR AUDIO AND TURN OFF VIDEO TO PREVENT DISRUPTION TO THE PROCEEDINGS. THE PUBLIC MAY VIEW OR LISTEN TO PROCEEDINGS, **BUT VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**

  
VINCE SANTINI, PRESIDING JUDGE