



DENTON COUNTY PROBATE COURT

Judge Bonnie Robison

David W. Jahn, Associate Judge

1450 E. McKinney, Suite 2412

Denton, Texas 76209-4524

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March 17, 2020

Re: Probate Court will use Zoom Video conferencing software for essential hearings

Dear Counselors:

Attached please find a First Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster issued jointly by the Supreme Court of Texas and the Court of Criminal Appeals on March 13, 2020 and continuing through May 8, 2020. In order to prevent risk to court staff, parties, attorneys and the general public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Paragraph 2(b) of the order permits court hearings in civil and criminal matters to be conducted remotely "by teleconferencing, videoconferencing, or other means." The Denton County Probate Court has elected to hold essential probate court hearings through use of the Zoom videoconferencing software.

For all essential hearings in the Denton County Probate, the attorneys and other attendees may attend the hearing through Zoom by using a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, I-Pad or smartphone which has video and audio capability. When the Probate Court is the host and you are invited to attend a hearing through the Zoom meeting room, there is no cost for the attorneys and other attendees to attend such hearings in the Probate Court. For use on desktop computers and laptops, attendees may download the program at <https://zoom.us/download>. For smartphones, attendees may download the application as follows:

Apple

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/id546505307>

Android

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.zoom.videomeetings>

At a reasonable time prior to the scheduled essential hearing, the Probate Court Administrator will e-mail each attendee an invitation with a link which will enable the user to attend the hearing by using Zoom. The Probate Court recommends that at least 30 minutes prior to a scheduled hearing, that attendees familiarize themselves with the Zoom software at zoom.us, which offers several online tutorials.

Respectfully,

Judge Bonnie Robison

# IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

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Misc. Docket No. 20-9042

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# IN THE COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS OF TEXAS

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Misc. Docket No. 20-007

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## FIRST EMERGENCY ORDER REGARDING THE COVID-19 STATE OF DISASTER

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### **ORDERED** that:

1. Governor Abbott has declared a state of disaster in all 254 counties in the State of Texas in response to the imminent threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. This order is issued pursuant to Section 22.0035(b) of the Texas Government Code.

2. Subject only to constitutional limitations, all courts in Texas may in any case, civil or criminal—and must to avoid risk to court staff, parties, attorneys, jurors, and the public—without a participant’s consent:

a. Modify or suspend any and all deadlines and procedures, whether prescribed by statute, rule, or order, for a stated period ending no later than 30 days after the Governor’s state of disaster has been lifted;

b. Allow or require anyone involved in any hearing, deposition, or other proceeding of any kind—including but not limited to a party, attorney, witness, or court reporter, but not including a juror—to participate remotely, such as by teleconferencing, videoconferencing, or other means;

c. Consider as evidence sworn statements made out of court or sworn testimony given remotely, out of court, such as by teleconferencing, videoconferencing, or other means;

d. Conduct proceedings away from the court's usual location, but in the county of venue, and only with reasonable notice and access to the participants and the public;

e. Require every participant in a proceeding to alert the court if the participant has, or knows of another participant who has, COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms, or a fever, cough or sneezing;

f. Take any other reasonable action to avoid exposing court proceedings to the threat of COVID-19.

3. All courts in Texas may extend the statute of limitations in any civil case for a stated period ending no later than 30 days after the Governor's state of disaster has been lifted.

4. This Order is effective as of March 13, 2020, and expires May 8, 2020, unless extended by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

5. The Clerk of the Supreme Court is directed to:

a. post a copy of this Order on [www.txcourts.gov](http://www.txcourts.gov);

b. file a copy of this Order with the Secretary of State; and

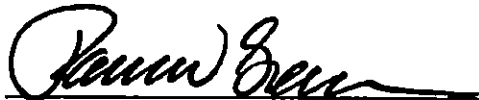
c. send a copy of this Order to the Governor, the Attorney General, and each member of the Legislature.

6. The State Bar of Texas is directed to take all reasonable steps to notify members of the Texas bar of this Order.

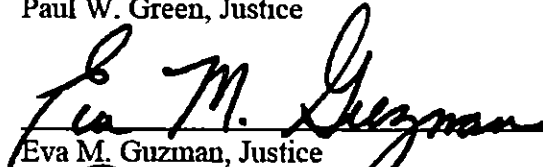
Dated: March 13, 2020



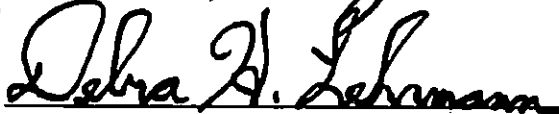
Nathan L. Hecht, Chief Justice



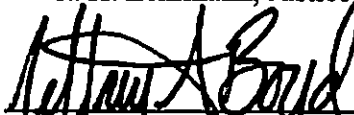
Paul W. Green, Justice



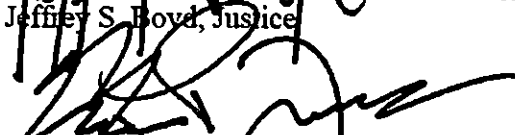
Eva M. Guzman, Justice



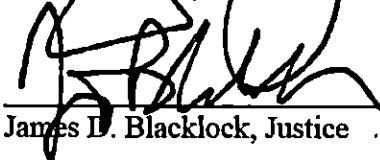
Debra H. Lehmann, Justice



Jeffrey S. Boyd, Justice



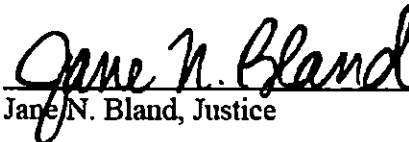
John P. Devine, Justice



James D. Blacklock, Justice



J. Brett Busby, Justice



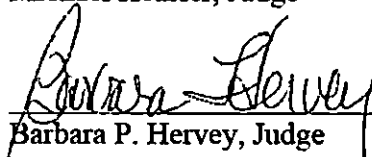
Jane N. Bland, Justice



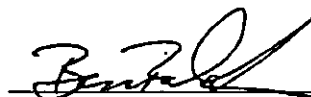
Sharon Keller, Presiding Judge



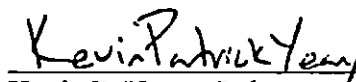
Michael Keasler, Judge




Barbara P. Hervey, Judge



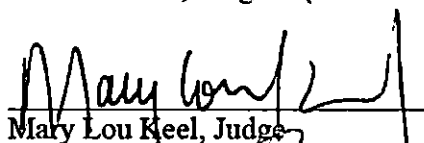
Bert Richardson, Judge



Kevin P. Yeary, Judge



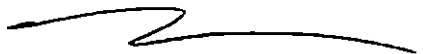
David Newell, Judge



Mary Lou Keel, Judge



Scott Walker, Judge



Michelle M. Slaughter, Judge