



STATE DISTRICT COURTS DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

Sherry Shipman, 16th District Court Bruce McFarling, 362nd District Court Jonathan Bailey, 431st District Court
Steve Burgess, 158th District Court Margaret Barnes, 367th District Court Tiffany Haertling, 442nd District Court
Brody Shanklin, 211th District Court Doug Robison, 393rd District Court Lee Ann Breeding, 462nd District Court

THIRD AMENDED DENTON COUNTY DISTRICT COURTS TEMPORARY GUIDELINES REGARDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Following the guidance from the Texas Supreme Court, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, Office Of Court Administration, and in conjunction with Denton County Public Health, the Denton County District Courts recognize the concerns about COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). As such, the health and safety of the public, and all employees, are of utmost concern and these temporary guidelines are hereby established to address these concerns in the following manner:

These guidelines are effective from April 6, 2020, until May 8, 2020.

1. If a Person is Sick

Everyone who is sick or who thinks they have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact (phone or email) the court to reschedule their hearings or trials. These individuals should not appear in court.

2. Essential and Non-Essential Court Hearings

Essential Court Matters will proceed by remote means, if possible, and only in-person if the hearing can be conducted in accordance with State and local mandates regarding social distancing / crowd sizes. Non-Essential Court Matters shall only be conducted via remote means, if the respective court approves such matter to be heard. **You must contact each court regarding any setting scheduled during the effective timeframe.**

3. Essential Court Matters

Civil and Family Law:

Essential court matters include, but are not limited to, CPS (DFPS) removal hearings, temporary restraining orders / temporary injunctions, family violence protective orders, and certain mental health proceedings.

Criminal Law:

Essential court matters include, but are not limited to, writs of habeas corpus, certain bond hearings, and any time-sensitive hearing required to be conducted by an Appellate Court.

Plea dockets will be limited to pleas wherein the defendants are currently incarcerated in the Denton County S.O. jail. The plea hearings will be conducted remotely as specified by the presiding court. For specific details, please contact the Court Administrator in the court the case is assigned to or the Denton County Criminal Defense Bar.

Announcement Dockets are non-essential and shall be reset. Defendants who are free on bail and represented by counsel shall not appear for any announcement setting in person. All reset notices will be emailed to the attorneys and bonding company. The Defendants will be mailed a copy of the reset notice. No pass slips will be required during the duration of these guidelines. All self-represented individuals must contact your bonding company and the Court Administrator, in the court your case is filed, to obtain a reset date. DO NOT appear in-person at court.

4. No Jury Trials

The district courts will not be calling any jury trials during the time this order is in effect.

5. Uncontested Matters and Prove-Up's by Submission only.

All uncontested Proposed Orders shall be submitted electronically. **This includes any proposed orders normally entered during morning prove-up dockets for each court between 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.** (Please note, prove-up Affidavits may be required). Please contact the specific Court Administrator if questions arise.

6. Electronic Appearances

Courts are conducting electronic appearances for Essential and Non-Essential hearings, as applicable. At the present time the courts are utilizing Zoom. Contact the Court Administrators and refer to the Remote Hearing Guidelines (posted on the courts' websites) for additional details.

7. Contact the Courts

Please refer to the Courts' websites for more information. If you have any questions, please email the Court Administrators directly.

**** PLEASE NOTE THE ABOVE TEMPORARY GUIDELINES MAY BE REVISED AT ANYTIME.**

Denton County District Courts

Denton County District Clerk

SIGNED on April 6, 2020.

/s/ Brody Shanklin

The Honorable Brody Shanklin

Local Administrative Judge

On Behalf of:

16th Judicial District, Hon. Sherry Shipman
158th Judicial District, Hon. Steven Burgess
362nd Judicial District, Hon. Bruce McFarling
367th Judicial District, Hon. Margaret Barnes
393rd Judicial District, Hon. Douglas Robison
431st Judicial District, Hon. Jonathan Bailey
442nd Judicial District, Hon. Tiffany Haertling
462nd Judicial District, Hon. Lee Ann Breading