

COURT COURT-AT-LAW NO. ONE  
405 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ST.  
GEORGETOWN, WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TEXAS



**SECOND GENERAL ORDER CIVIL CASES  
REGARDING HEARINGS IN A VIRTUAL COURTROOM ENVIRONMENT  
UNDER THE 2020 STATE OF DISASTER –  
COVID-19 AND RELATED CORONAVIRUS**

In response to the declarations by the Governor of the State of Texas, and by the President of the United States, in conformance with *First Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster* and any and all subsequent orders, issued by the Supreme Court of Texas and the Court of Criminal Appeals<sup>1</sup>, and in compliance with the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Williamson County Judiciary the following orders are in place.

Based on the above referenced orders, hearings are required to be scheduled via VIRTUAL COURTROOM TECHNOLOGIES unless litigants or other court participants are unable to successfully participate in a remote hearing for reasons beyond the court's control. County Court-at-Law No One is currently utilizing Microsoft TEAMS for Virtual Courtroom Hearings which is subject to change to other virtual software.

**To set a hearing**, please contact the Court Coordinator, Terry Barrick, [tbarrickk@wilco.org](mailto:tbarrickk@wilco.org) or (512) 943-1200. Ms. Barrick will set the case for a hearing in compliance with the Williamson County Local Rules.

**For eviction proceedings**, filed with this Court from March 27, 2020-July 25, 2020, the Plaintiff must file a sworn statement that the eviction case is not subject to the Federal CARES Act. A hearing shall not be scheduled until this requirement is met.

Due to the nature of virtual hearings, there are **specific requirements concerning entering exhibits or other documents** during the hearing. Please see Exhibit A, Section 3 (b) (ii).

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED** that the party scheduling the Virtual Courtroom Hearing serve notice of the hearing pursuant to the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the party scheduling the Virtual Courtroom Hearing shall include in the notice of hearing instructions sufficient for the opposing counsel and party to

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<sup>1</sup> Misc. Docket No. 20-9042 (Tex.) Misc. Docket No. 20-007 (Tex. Crim. App.), accessed at <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446056/209042.pdf>

make an appearance at the hearing. The notice shall include the following: 1) this Order; and 2) the following language in bold print,

**Participants without visual/audio capability: a room will be provided on the second floor of the Williamson County Courthouse with the appropriate equipment to participate in the hearing. Please contact the Court staff to coordinate, tbarrick@wilco.org, or 512 943-1200.**

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the party serving notice of the hearing shall file the notice of hearing with the Court at least 48 hours in advance of the hearing.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the party scheduling the Virtual Courtroom Hearing provide the Court Coordinator with sufficient contact information for the attorneys and parties, in order for the court coordinator to send the parties an email calendar invitation through Microsoft TEAMS or other virtual software as described in Exhibit A.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the parties shall follow *The Procedure for Conducting Electronic and Telephone Court Hearings in Civil Cases* attached as Exhibit A.

Signed on June 10, 2020

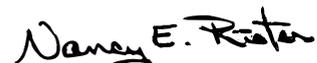


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Brandy Hallford  
Date: 2020.06.10  
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Brandy Hallford  
Presiding Judge,  
County Court-at-Law No. One  
Williamson County, Texas

**FILED**  
at 1:04 o'clock A M  
JUN 11 2020 

  
County Clerk Williamson Co., TX

## EXHIBIT A

### PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING ELECTRONIC & TELEPHONE COURT HEARINGS IN CIVIL CASES

#### 1. PROCEDURE FOR JOINING A HEARING

- a. **Devices:** A participant may access Microsoft Teams to join a meeting anytime, from any smart device, with or without a Microsoft Teams account.
- b. **Hearing:** Prior to the hearing, the participant will receive an email from the Court with a link to “**Join Microsoft Teams Meeting.**” Click on this link. It will bring you to a webpage where you can choose to either 1) “Join on the Web” or 2) “Download the Teams App.”
- c. **Participant to join as a guest:**
  - i. If you are on a **desktop computer**, “Join on the Web” is easiest. *Note: You must use Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge as your web-browser to use Teams on the web.*
  - ii. **If you are using a mobile device, downloading the Teams App is easiest. It will ask you to allow Teams to use your Audio and Video from your computer (you must have a camera and a microphone), and it will ask you to type in your name and click “Join Now.”**
  - iii. Please see the link for assistance <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/join-a-meeting-without-a-teams-account-c6efc38f-4e03-4e79-b28f-e65a4c039508>
- d. **Participant to join with the Teams application:** You will receive an email from the Court with a link to “Join Microsoft Teams Meeting.” Click on this link and the meeting will open automatically.
- e. **Once Participant has joined to the Hearing:**
  - i. The participant will be placed in the “Lobby” for the Videoconference to begin.
  - ii. The person coordinating the call will let you into the Videoconference once it begins.
- f. **Prohibited: Record Meetings:** Parties are prohibited from recording the proceedings.

#### 2. VISUAL/AUDIO CAPABILITY

- a. **Visual capabilities:** To have visual capabilities, in addition to audio, you must have a computer, smartphone, or tablet with a webcam.
- b. **Participant experiencing technical difficulties:** If you are unable to use the Teams application or Teams on the web, you can join the meeting by calling the phone number and conference ID in the meeting invitation, just dial the number to join.

- c. **Participants without visual/audio capability:** For participants who do not have visual/audio capability, a room on the second floor of the courthouse has the appropriate equipment to participate in the hearing. Contact the Court Coordinator for additional information tbarrick@wilco.org, or 512 943-1200.
- d. **Visual Appearance:** The Court strongly recommends the parties and counsel appear using visual capabilities. If the parties fail to appear visually, the Court may determine it is more appropriate to reschedule the hearing for a date after the disaster declaration lifts.

### 3. PROCEDURE FOR HEARINGS

- a. **There are several ways the hearing can be conducted:**
  - i. Counsel may have their client and witnesses physically present in their office.
  - ii. Counsel may also participate from one location, the client can participate from another location, and a witness can participate from a different location.
  - iii. If it becomes necessary for the attorney and client to speak privately, the Court will allow time for a phone conversation, text or other electronic means communication.
- b. **Witness Testimony and Exhibits**
  - i. Witness testimony will be taken by the Official Court Reporter.
  - ii. Exhibit Submission and Retention:
    - 1. Parties will be required to electronically provide the court reporter and opposing counsel/party their pre-marked exhibits no later than **24-hours** prior to the hearing.
    - 2. **Parties are required to uploaded exhibits or documents intended to be introduced during the hearing through Laserfiche 24-hours prior to the hearing. Please use the following link: <https://forms.wilco.org/Forms/UploadCCL1>.**
    - 3. The Court may make exceptions for pro se litigants who do not have the technology to comply with this section. Exceptions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
    - 4. The Court Reporter will keep and file copies of exhibits per her normal procedure.
- c. **Submission and Entry of Orders:**
  - i. Proposed orders shall be efiled with the Williamson County Clerk's Office.
  - ii. Following submission, the Court will sign orders electronically.