



Hon. LaShawn A. Williams

County Civil Court at Law No.3

HARRIS COUNTY CIVIL COURT AT LAW NO. 3 **INSTRUCTIONS FOR VIDEO HEARINGS & TRIALS**

All Harris County Civil Courts at Law use Zoom video conferencing. Please download the free Zoom Client Application well in advance of the hearing:

- The free app for smartphones is available at the Apple App Store for iPhones and Google Play for Androids.
- The free software for your computer is available at Zoom.us. Click on the “Resources” tab at the top right and select “Download Zoom Client.”
- Please review how to use Zoom and its various features by accessing the following link: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>
- If you cannot download or run the Zoom application, you are given the option to join from your browser once you have clicked the “Join the Zoom” at <http://www.ccl.hctx.net/CourtStream.html>.

● **Setting Your Video Hearing**

- **REQUESTING A DATE:** Motions will be set on the Court’s Submission Docket. Yet, parties may request to be moved from the Submission Docket and set for a preferential oral hearing by filing a Motion Requesting Oral Hearing and Proposed Order. Please contact the Court with any questions.
 - **NOTE TO ATTORNEYS:** Attorneys are responsible for sending the Zoom link and information to their clients and witnesses if they will need to join the hearing from a location separate from the attorney. Attorneys are also responsible for sending the link and information to *pro se* litigants and confirming that they have instructions on how to access Zoom.
- On the day of the hearing, click the “**Join with Zoom**” link located on the Civil Court Streams and Meeting Rooms page at <http://www.ccl.hctx.net/CourtStream.html> at least 5-10 minutes before your hearing to test your system, and to ensure that everything is in working order.
- **Parties and witnesses giving testimony on the day of trial must appear by video.**
- Please confirm you are in a private safe location free from outside noise, interference and distractions at the time of hearing.

- **What to Expect Once Signed in to Zoom for Your Hearing**

- **RECORDING STRICTLY PROHIBITED:** The recording of any proceeding by anyone other than the Court Reporter is strictly prohibited by law. The Court Reporter's record is the only official record of the proceedings.
- **Courtroom Decorum:** We will continue to observe appropriate courtroom decorum, demeanor, and dress codes. Remote hearings are official court hearings and open to the public via the Civil Court Streams and Meeting Rooms. For additional information, please visit <http://www.ccl.hctx.net/CourtStream.html>.
- **Once Signed In:** You may be placed in a "Waiting Room" or "Breakout Room" until your case is called. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE the room unless instructed by the Court. While in those rooms you may send chat messages to the Trial Coordinator or Clerk. When your case is called, the Coordinator or Clerk will open your video conference with the Judge. If it is necessary during the proceedings for the parties to seek a recess, break or confer, the parties may be placed in a "Breakout" room in Zoom upon request.
- **Breakout Room (Joining/Leaving):**
 - These rooms are used by the Court so that parties may confer prior to the hearing. DO NOT leave the breakout room unless instructed by the Court.
 - Joining
 - When prompted by the Court click "join"; or
 - Computer: On the bottom of the screen, select "breakout room," then "join breakout room"; or
 - Smartphone/Tablet: Top left of the screen, select "breakout room," then "join breakout room."
 - Telephone: When prompted by the audio press # (pound)
 - Leaving
 - Computer: On the bottom of the screen, select "leave," then "leave breakout room"; or
 - Smartphone/Tablet: Top right of the screen, select "leave," then "return to main session."
 - Telephone: Hang-up the phone and then redial into the Hearing by dialing (346)-248-7799 then enter the 10 digit Meeting ID 549 990 5106 for Court 3.
- **Live Stream:** You will not be able to observe the proceedings while you are in the Zoom "Waiting" or "Breakout" Rooms; however, you will be able to monitor the live proceedings via the Court's streaming link: <http://www.ccl.hctx.net/CourtStream.html>
- **ALL EXHIBITS MUST BE TIMELY E-FILED PRIOR TO THE HEARING/TRIAL. All such exhibits must be exchanged with all parties prior to the setting.** If a *pro se* party does not have the ability to e-file, the *pro se* party must email the exhibits to the court reporter and other party at least 24 hours prior to the hearing. Please redact any sensitive material.
- **Request for Record:** A request for the record must be emailed to the Court Reporter at least 24 hours prior to the hearing.

- **Sharing Documents During Zoom:** Exhibits for trial are expected to be shared using the screen share function. Documents can be shared in two ways:
 - **With participants** via the “Chat” tab in Zoom. Use the “To:” drop-down selection to choose to whom to send your document and click the “File” button to upload your document. Zoom can upload documents directly from your computer, Dropbox, Google Drive, and One Drive. Additional set up may be required. See <https://zoom.us/integrations> for more.
 - **Screen Share** – The Court requires that those who have evidence they wish to share with the court be familiar with using the share screen feature via Zoom.
 - Computers/Tablets/Smartphones: See “Share Screen” bottom center of the screen. Ensure you close any private matters before sharing the screen.
 - Please refer to Zoom Help Center tutorials, search share screen, and then watch short “how to” videos: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>
- **Interpreters:** Interpreters should have computer access to view documents that need translating. Arrangements for interpreters shall be made at least 24 hours prior to the hearing. Notice of the same should be given to the other parties and the Court via e-filing, or email if the party does not have access to e-filing.
- **For Contested Hearings and Trials**
 - Texas Supreme Court Emergency Orders expressly prohibit non-essential jury trials until further notice.
 - Any documents offered into evidence should be shared with all parties prior to the hearing. To the extent possible, parties should agree on what is admissible prior to the hearing. The Court may require a pre-trial hearing.
 - Parties may invoke the Rule to exclude non-party witnesses. The Judge can move remote witnesses to a virtual meeting room where they will be unable to view the proceedings. However, because each proceeding is broadcasted on the Court’s live streaming site, the witnesses will be instructed not to view the proceedings subject to contempt of court.
 - Discovery – Depositions may be taken remotely, pursuant to Texas Supreme Court Emergency Orders.
 - Mediation – Many mediators are equipped with Zoom or other remote video services. Parties should continue to actively mediate their cases during this emergency period.

These procedures are to be used in conjunction with the Court Procedures for Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 3 and the Local Rules of the County Civil Courts at Law.

(Effective August 2020)