

Chief Hearing Officer Job Description

PRIMARY DUTIES

The Criminal Law Hearing Officer serves as magistrate in the Harris County Probable Cause Court. This Court operates as a 24/7 operation located in the Harris County Joint Processing Center. Criminal Law Hearing Officers are independent judicial officers regarding the cases/defendants that appear before them. Criminal Law Hearing Officers take general direction from the Chief Criminal Law Hearing Officer. Criminal Law Hearing Officers are appointed by the statutory Criminal Law Hearing Officer Committee. The Criminal Law Hearing Officer will be responsible for the following duties:

STATUTORY DUTIES

Criminal Law Hearing Officer will staff hearings on a 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week schedule. A criminal law hearing officer has limited concurrent jurisdiction over criminal cases filed in the district courts, county criminal courts at law, and justice courts of Harris County. The jurisdiction of the criminal law hearing officer is limited to:

1. Determine probable cause for further detention of any person detained on a criminal complaint, information or indictment filed in the district courts, county criminal courts at law, or justice courts of Harris County;
2. Commit the defendant to jail, discharge the defendant from custody, or admit the defendant to bail, as the law and facts of the case require;
3. Timely issue search warrants and arrest warrants as provided by law for magistrates;
4. As to criminal cases filed in justice courts, dispose of cases as provided by law, other than by trial, and collect fines and enforce judgments and orders of the justice courts in criminal cases;
5. Hear emergency mental health matters under Chapter 573, Health and Safety Code.

QUALIFICATIONS

1. Must be a resident of Harris County, Texas;
2. Must have been licensed to practice law in Texas for at least five years;

3. Must not have been defeated for reelection to a judicial office;
4. Must not have been removed from office:
 - by impeachment, by the Supreme Court, by the Governor on address to the legislature;
 - by the legislature's abolition of the judge's court;
 - by resigning from office after having received notice that formal proceedings by the State Commission on Judicial Conduct had been instituted as provided in Section 33.022, Government Code, and before the final disposition of the proceedings.
5. Must abide by all requirements as set forth in the Canons of Judicial Conduct.