

## AMENDED CCCL# 9 APPEARANCE POLICY & RULES OF COURT: (Effective January 1, 2024)

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Beginning Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, Harris County Criminal Court at Law No. 9 will continue holding in-person dockets and virtual appearances for attorneys only, except for Arraignment settings. Attorneys are expected to appear in person for all Arraignment court settings. Defendants are **only required to appear** in person for **ESSENTIAL** proceedings as described below and in the Courts Scheduling Order which can be found in the following locations: (1) the Court 9 webpage; (2) Posted on the interior and exterior of the physical Court 9 courtroom; and (3) uploaded in every active Court 9 case via the Harris County District Clerk's website: <https://www.hcdistrictclerk.com/Common/Default.aspx>.

A virtual court appearance means an appearance made by a person using a device capable of real-time simultaneous audio and video capabilities. All persons appearing virtually for court appearances **shall** exercise and conduct themselves as if they are appearing in person. Failure to comply may result in the removal of that individual's ability to appear virtually for any and all future court appearances. **Moreover, when appearing virtually: (1) Please ensure that your name correctly appears in the virtual court waiting room or you will not be admitted into the virtual courtroom; (2) Please keep your device on mute until your case is called; (3) Once your case is called, video is required.**

Individuals who are excluded from virtual court appearances for "ESSENTIAL" court proceedings shall appear in person, **unless** otherwise ordered by the Court. If a Defendant has not maintained contact with their attorney, or has an active Bond Violation Report, they may be required to appear in advance of the scheduled setting or on the date of the court setting. The Court and/or Pre-Trial Services will notify the parties should either apply.

If you are feeling sick, **do not** come to the courthouse. Instead, contact the Court Coordinator in advance of your scheduled court date to receive further instructions. Feel free to utilize the following link for Case Resets for any settings other than the Arraignment setting, Pre-Trial Conference settings, and contested settings: <https://www.ccl.hctx.net/ResetForm/Default>. Please monitor your emails for a response from the Court. If your client has an active Bond Violation Report or Warrant, the case may not be reset without prior approval from the Presiding Judge.

The Judge retains the authority to **require** the appearance of any defendant for any court setting in accordance with the Harris County Criminal Courts at Law Local Rules.

- **DOCKET SCHEDULING: ALL Dockets Begin at 9:00 a.m.**
  - **ALL MISDEMEANOR CASES:**
    - Attorneys will be expected to exercise due diligence in working up cases, in addition to, scheduling court appearances as necessary to resolve party disputes and cases effectively and justly within 180 days.
  - **ROCKET DOCKET WEEK (The Last Week of Each Month):** The Court will **only** hear Jail Cases and Uncontested matters, with prior approval from the Presiding Judge. Rocket Dockets concludes at 11:00 a.m.
  
- **ESSENTIAL PROCEEDINGS: Refer to the Courts Scheduling Order for Required Appearances:** (<https://ccl.hctx.net/criminal/9/Files/Case%20Scheduling%20Order.pdf>)
  - Pre-Trial Motions Settings
  - Pre-Trial Conference Settings
  - Jury Trial Settings
  - Cases Set for Entry of a Plea
  - Bail Review Hearings
  - Bond Violation Hearings

- Motions to Adjudicate & Motions to Revoke Hearings
- Writs of Habeas Corpus
- Contested Petitions for Non-Disclosures
- Occupational Driver's Licenses

- **COURT PLEA AGREEMENTS:**

- Parties may appear “Off Docket” **any time** prior to a scheduled setting to enter into a plea agreement. The Court **will not** accept plea agreements on the date of a Jury Trial without prior approval from the Presiding Judge.
  - If a Defendant is **in custody**, please immediately notify the Court Coordinator at least (1) day prior to the date of the plea to ensure that the Court can have the person brought over from the Harris County Jail.

- **STANDING DISCOVERY ORDER:**

- Harris County Criminal Court at Law No. 9 has a Standing Discovery Order that **shall** be signed by all parties filing an Attorney of Record with the Court no later than the Non-Trial Setting: <https://ccl.hctx.net/criminal/9/Files/Standing%20Discovery%20Order.pdf>.

- **CONTACTING THE COURT:**

- The best method to contact Court 9 team members is via email. Staff email addresses are linked on each court's website: <https://ccl.hctx.net/criminal/9/default.htm>. Due to a high volume of emails and voicemails, you may not receive an immediate response, but we will respond as soon as possible. We thank you in advance for your patience and consideration.

- **TO BE's & ACTIVE WARRANTS:**

- Defense Counsel can schedule a To-Be & Active Warrant walk-thru with the Court by contacting the Court Coordinator in advance. To ensure a prompt response, an email request is preferred. To avoid *Ex Parte* Communications with the Court, please copy the State of Texas on ALL emails directed to the Court.

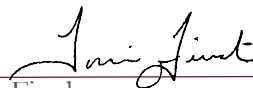
- **JURY TRIALS:**

- **Emergency Response Docket (“ERD”):**
  - Please be informed that Court 9 will utilize the ERD at the Presiding Judge's discretion to ensure that all jury trials are heard and disposed efficiently.
  - The ERD is located in the Family Law Center, 1115 Congress, 4th floor, Houston, TX 77002. The Courtroom is to the left of the hallway after you exit the elevators. The ERD does not have a regular docket so **Jury Selection will begin at 9:00 a.m.**, or as soon as the panel arrives. Testimony will begin as soon as the jury is seated. All Parties shall be present in court at 8:45 a.m. and make sure all parties are aware of the location change. If more than one case is ready to go, ERD will carry the other cases day for day. Please immediately contact ERD Court Coordinator: Mrs. Yolanda Florido with all case updates and request for an interpreter via email: [Yolanda\\_Florido@ccl.hctx.net](mailto:Yolanda_Florido@ccl.hctx.net).
  - Please be further informed that Jury Trials designated to the ERD may be assigned to/withdrawn from the ERD prior to the date scheduled for Jury Trial at the discretion of the Presiding Judge of Court 9. Additionally, parties may receive further instructions from Mrs. Florido, so please closely monitor your emails. Lastly, if your case disposition results in a probation, please immediately contact Court 9's CLO, Ms. Carmen Sanchez via email: [Carmen.Sanchez@csc.hctx.net](mailto:Carmen.Sanchez@csc.hctx.net). **Probations occurring after 4pm SHALL return to Court 9 located at the Criminal Justice Center the following business day at 9:00 am. Failure to appear may result in an arrest warrant.**

- **Request for Continuances for ERD Jury Trials:** Request for Continuances **shall only** be heard and approved by the Presiding Judge of Court 9. Please also refer to the Court’s Motion for Continuance Policy:  
<https://ccl.hctx.net/criminal/9/Files/Motion%20for%20Continuance%20Policy.pdf> .
- **Court 9 Jury Trial(s):** All Attorneys and Defendants **shall** be “Ready for Trial” and appear in Court 9 during Docket Call for Jury Trial Announcements no later than 9:30 a.m. on the scheduled Trial Day. Your case may be moved to the #1 position at any point in time. If your case is not reached, a new Jury Trial date will be provided or rolled to the next available date on the Court’s calendar. Jury Selection will occur in County Criminal Court at Law No. 9 on the 10th floor of the Criminal Justice Center, located at 1201 Franklin Street, Houston, TX 77002. **Jury Selection will begin at 1:00 p.m.**
- **NOTICE FOR ALL JURY TRIALS:** Parties are encouraged to appear “Off Docket” to dispose of cases prior to the scheduled Jury Trial date. **No Plea Agreements will be accepted on trial day unless prior approval is received from the Presiding Judge of Court 9.**
- **MOTIONS FOR CONTINUANCE:**
  - Request for Continuances **shall only** be heard by the Presiding Judge of Court 9. Please refer to the Court’s Motion for Continuance Policy:  
<https://ccl.hctx.net/criminal/9/Files/Motion%20for%20Continuance%20Policy.pdf> .

**January 1, 2024**

Date Signed



Toria J. Finch

Presiding Judge

Harris County Criminal Court at Law No. 9