

Hon. George Barnstone
County Civil Court at Law No.1



Hon. LaShawn A. Williams
County Civil Court at Law No.3

Hon. Jim F. Kovach
County Civil Court at Law No.2

Hon. Lesley Briones
County Civil Court at Law No. 4

March 11, 2020

JOINT STATEMENT REGARDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS


The health and safety of attorneys, their clients, the public, and those who work in the courthouse are paramount. The county civil courts at law are doing their part to address recent concerns over the Coronavirus and are conveying some guidelines for staying safe.

First, the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. It is important to stay up to date on information. Three resources are the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov), The Texas Department of State and Health Services (www.dshs.texas.gov), and locally in Harris County at the Public Health Task Force Hotline Number at (713) 274-3880 or by email at PHTaskForce@eng.hctx.net and website: (<http://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Resources/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>).

Second, according to the CDC, the immediate risk of COVID-19 to the American public is low¹. However, you can prevent the spread of this and other types of respiratory illnesses by:

- Washing hands often and for at least 20 seconds
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick (call for a continuance – see below)
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Third, if you or your client(s) feel flu-like symptoms and you have an in-person court appearance scheduled in March 2020, please contact the court clerk and/or trial coordinator to discuss potential options for a remote appearance or resetting your matter. We will give all due consideration for health concerns while continuing to proceed on cases as appropriate.


Judge George Barnstone
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¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>; last visited March 10, 2020