

AMENDED CCCL# 9 APPEARANCE POLICY: COVID-19 Response (Effective September 28, 2020)

Beginning Monday, September 28, 2020, Harris County Criminal Court at Law No. 9 will resume holding minimal in-person dockets and virtual hearings in compliance with the Emergency Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Texas, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, and in accordance with the guidance issued by the Office of Court Administration regarding social distancing, maximum group size, and other restrictions and precautions. Defendants represented by an Attorney who have filed an Attorney of Record with the Court are **ONLY** required to appear for **“ESSENTIAL”** proceedings.

“ESSENTIAL” PROCEEDINGS ARE DEFINED AS:

- Arraignment Settings Without an Attorney of Record on File
- Cases Set for Entry of a Plea
- Bail Review Hearings
- Bond Violation Hearings
- Cases Set for Bond Forfeiture
- Pre-Trial Hearings
- Writs of Habeas Corpus
- Contested Petitions for Non-Disclosures
- Occupational Driver’s Licenses

“NON-ESSENTIAL” PROCEEDINGS ARE DEFINED AS:

- Case Conferences/Pre-Trial Conferences
- Other Court Related Matters **Not** Mentioned Above that Can be Addressed by Virtual Appearance.

A virtual court appearance means an appearance made by a person using a device capable of real-time simultaneous audio and video capabilities.

Parties that are not able to participate virtually for **“ESSENTIAL”** court proceedings shall appear in person, **unless** otherwise ordered by the Court.

ALL in-court participants will be screened in accordance with CDC Guidelines. 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. Virtual appearances are highly encouraged, **unless** otherwise ordered by the Court.

The Court will handle **“NON-ESSENTIAL”** proceedings remotely via teleconferencing and virtual court appearance. You may participate in virtual proceedings and view a live stream of ALL proceedings on the Court’s channel: <http://www.ccl.hctx.net/CourtStream.html>. Per guidance from the Office of Court Administration, this channel adheres to the open courts provision of the Texas Constitution.

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: Regular Docket Begin at 9:00 a.m.**
 - **ALL MISDEMEANOR CASES:**
 - Attorneys are 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.
 - If, a **Bond** Case is Not Disposed within 180 Days the Case **SHALL** Be Set for a Pre-Trial Conference Setting.
 - If, a **Jail** Case is Not Disposed within 60 Days the Case **SHALL** Be Set for a Pre-Trial Conference Setting.

- **COURT PLEA AGREEMENTS:**
 - Defense Counsel and Pro Se Litigants may set cases on docket on either Wednesday or Thursday any time prior to a scheduled court date by contacting the Court Coordinator.
- **STANDING DISCOVERY ORDER:**
 - Harris County Criminal Court at Law No. 9 has a Standing Discovery Order that shall be signed by all Attorneys filing an Attorney of Record with the Court.
- **CONTACTING THE COURT:**
 - Our clerks and coordinators are working remotely. Access to phones and voicemail is limited. The best method to contact clerks and coordinators is through email. Staff email addresses are linked on each court's website. Due to a high volume of emails and voicemails, you may not receive an immediate response. 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:**
 - Jury trials will be scheduled in accordance with the dates issued by the Harris County Board of Judges.
- **MOTIONS FOR CONTINUANCE:**
 - Please refer to the Court's Motion for Continuance Policy.

9/28/2020
Date Signed



Presiding Judge
Harris County Criminal Court at Law No. 9