

Ashley Wysocki
District Judge



Michele Morneault
Court Coordinator

Donald Turner
Associate Judge

Janet Saavaedra
Court Reporter

254th JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
600 COMMERCE STREET
DALLAS, TEXAS 75202

PROCEDURES DURING COVID 19

The Court is operating remotely using Zoom video conferencing and by consideration of certain matters by submission. There are no in person hearings being held at this time. The Court will notify you prior to your setting whether it will be held remotely or by submission.

ENTRY OF ORDERS:

Agreed orders may be submitted to the Court for signature by emailing the Court Coordinator (Michele.morneault@dallascounty.org). The Court will only sign agreed final orders by submission with an answer or waiver on file. No default orders will be signed by submission. The Court has a default Zoom docket for defaults and waivers requiring the submission of evidence.

The Court is allowing prove-up of Agreed Decrees of Divorce through a Zoom prove-up docket or by affidavit. A copy of the template for the affidavit can be found on the Court's website or through emailing the Court Coordinator. Agreed Final Decrees of Divorce being proved up by affidavit must be submitted with an Austin form.

If you have an emergency that necessitates entry of a default order, then you may schedule a remote hearing with the Court after providing proof of the nature of the emergency.

SETTING HEARINGS:

On Judge Wysocki's Docket:

- Email the Court Coordinator (Michele.morneault@dallascounty.org) and copy opposing counsel/pro se for available dates. The subject line of the email must include the cause number.
- Once you have a setting, the Court Coordinator will provide you with the remote appearance instructions or instructions for submission.

On Judge Turner's Docket:

- Call the Clerk at 214-653-7385 to set your hearing.
- Once you have a setting, email the Court Coordinator (Michele.morneault@dallascounty.org) and copy opposing counsel/pro se to obtain the remote appearance instructions or instructions for submission. The subject line of the email must include the cause number.

Presenting an Emergency Ex Parte Motion:

- E-file the motion along with a certificate of conference and proposed order.
- Email the Court Coordinator (Michele.morneault@dallascounty.org) and copy opposing counsel/self-represented litigants when appropriate. Attach the motion, certificate of conference, and proposed order to the email.
- The Court Coordinator or Judge Turner will confirm a time that a judge will consider the motion by submission or by remote appearance and you will be provided the remote appearance instructions (if necessary).

PROCEDURE/RULES FOR REMOTE APPEARANCES:

LITIGANTS:

Zoom Video Conferencing software is free to download at zoom.us or you can download the app directly to your cell phone. The Court Coordinator will email you a link to the hearing. Your computer must have internet access and a microphone. If you wish to appear through video, your computer must have a camera. If you do not have a computer, you may still appear by audio by calling in on a landline or cell phone.

If you intend to offer any exhibits during a hearing you need to email them to all counsel/self-represented litigants no later than 12:00 p.m. the day before the hearing. For hearings before Judge Wysocki, email them to the Court Coordinator (Michele.morneault@dallascounty.org). For hearings before Judge Turner, email them to Judge Turner (donald.turner@dallascounty.org). The subject of the email should be "full cause number - Petitioner's Exhibits" or "full cause number - Respondent's Exhibits. The exhibits must be in PDF format. Exhibits should be in separate identifiable files such as "Petitioner 1," "Petitioner 2," etc.

Your email must not contain any ex parte communications or it will be rejected. The Court cannot consider any exhibits not emailed in a timely manner. If you fail to follow this requirement the Court Reporter will not maintain these documents in the record.

Should there be a loss of connection or other technical difficulty on Zoom, please contact the Court Coordinator (Michele.morneault@dallascounty.org).

WITNESSES:

Witnesses MUST appear by video conferencing. The attorney/self-represented litigant calling the witness is responsible for ensuring that the witness has a separate video and audio feed. You should not attempt to "share" a connection with a witness. It is the responsibility of the person offering the witness to ensure that the witness has the link to the proceedings and that all exhibits are available to the witness, including those of opposing parties.

PUBLIC:

THE OPEN COURTS PROVISION OF TEXAS LAW ALLOWS ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS. AS SUCH ANYONE MAY EMAIL THE COURT COORDINATOR TO GET ACCESS CODES TO HEARINGS. IF YOU ARE VIEWING, PLEASE MUTE YOUR CONNECTION TO PREVENT DISRUPTION TO THE PROCEEDINGS.

BE AWARE THAT VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING IS PROHIBITED. ANY RECORDING OF THE HEARINGS BY AUDIO OR VIDEO, BY ANY PARTY, ATTORNEY, WITNESS, OR THIRD PARTY IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. THIS IS TO PROTECT THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE CHILDREN AND PROTECTED HIPPA INFORMATION.

ALL PARTICIPANTS AND PUBLIC ARE EXPECTED TO RESPECT THE DECORUM AND SOLEMNITY OF ALL COURT PROCEEDINGS, INCLUDING THOSE HELD REMOTELY. THE COURT MAINTAINS THE RIGHT TO RESTRICT ACCESS TO ANY PARTICIPANTS OR PUBLIC WHO ARE DISRESPECTFUL, HARASSING, DISRUPTIVE, OR OTHERWISE ENDANGER THE BEST INTEREST OF A CHILD THROUGH THEIR BEHAVIOR.

INTERPRETERS:

Interpreters will appear remotely. Please contact the Court Coordinator (Michele.morneault@dallascounty.org) at least one week prior to the hearing setting if you need assistance acquiring an interpreter.