

MAR 01 2021 LJ

At 4:00 P.M.
Velva L. Price, District Clerk

IN THE TRAVIS COUNTY CIVIL AND FAMILY COURTS

Administrative File No. GN-61-121012

**FOURTH AMENDED EMERGENCY ORDER
REGARDING COVID-19**

Effective March 1, 2021

1. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the orders issued by the Governor, Travis County, and the City of Austin, and the Emergency Orders that have been issued by the Supreme Court of Texas,¹ and to protect the due process rights and public health of all citizens, the Travis County Civil and Family Courts have suspended in-person hearings and jury trials, but are holding remote hearings and a limited number of remote jury trials. This Fourth Amended Emergency Order replaces the Third Amended Emergency Order Regarding COVID-19, which was effective on June 29, 2020.

This Order and any updated Emergency Orders will be posted on the Travis County Civil Courts website: <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/courts/civil/civil-courts-covid-19-information>.

2. **All hearings and trials are being held remotely and shall continue to be scheduled or re-scheduled as set out below².**
 - a. Non-jury civil and family matters shall be set through Court Administration, either online at <https://www.traviscourtsapplications.org/portal> or by telephone at 512/854-2484, pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Travis County Local Rules (https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/courts/Docs/local_rules_civildistrict.pdf). In addition to the non-jury settings available in the Local Rules, hearings of three hours or less may be scheduled for 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Thursdays of jury weeks, and 9:00 a.m. on Fridays of any week. Please note that Court Administration will restrict the number of settings on each civil docket based on the number of judges available.
 - b. Remote jury trials are being held during jury weeks. In-person hearings, bench trials, and jury trials will not resume until the Travis County Civil and Family Courts determine that it is safe to do so, in coordination with public health officials, the Office of Court Administration, the Texas Supreme Court, and various Travis County and City of Austin departments.

¹ The Supreme Court of Texas has issued 35 emergency orders as of the effective date of this Order, many of which apply to the Travis County Civil and Family Courts. The emergency orders can be found at <https://www.txcourts.gov/court-coronavirus-information/emergency-orders/>.

² Cases that are specially assigned to particular judges pursuant to Local Rules 2.6 and 10.2 are discussed in paragraph 7 and CPS cases are discussed in paragraphs 13 and 14. Juvenile Court matters are discussed in paragraph 15.

3. Uncontested and agreed non-jury matters, including those requiring testimony, will be handled by requesting written submission consideration directly to the court in which the case is filed. **The twice daily Uncontested Docket is suspended until further notice. The Duty Judge will NOT be handling uncontested or agreed matters, so submission is the appropriate manner to handle these matters.** Written submission requests must include any affidavits, declarations, or other necessary supporting records, and should be handled pursuant to the Standing Order for Submission Procedures in Civil and Family Cases: <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/courts/Docs/standing-order-for-submission-procedures.pdf>.
4. **The assigned Duty Judge for each week will handle only emergency matters and orders to appear.** The Duty Judge for each week is posted at <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/courts/files/dockets/civil-district>. The Thursday morning Continuance Docket, along with Uncontested Docket, will not be held while this Emergency Order remains in effect. Motions for continuance should generally be set on the Central Docket. The Duty Judge should be contacted with any emergency matters, and that judge will determine if a matter qualifies as an emergency, and if so, if an emergency hearing must be held in person for any reason.
5. **Docket call announcements for all civil and family non-jury matters must be received during the announcement period the week before each setting,** including for all family law matters and for hearings on Friday, which is a change from the Local Rules and prior practice. The form for docket call announcements is posted at https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/courts/Docs/docketcall_civilcriminal_district.pdf. **Cases in which the required announcements are not made will not be heard as scheduled and must be reset.** On the Friday prior to a scheduled hearing or trial, Court Administration will post dockets for the following week with court assignments. Court staff will contact the lawyers and self-represented parties to notify them of the Zoom meeting IDs and passwords, and to provide links and instructions to upload any documents the parties will seek to introduce into evidence at the hearing or trial, as well as any special procedures for the assigned court. **Additional procedures for the Family Docket can be found at** <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/courts/files/family-law>.
6. **Remote jury trials are subject to special requirements, including docket call announcements four weeks before trial, as explained in TRAVIS COUNTY DISTRICT COURT REMOTE JURY TRIAL PROCEDURES,** posted at <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/courts/Docs/remote-jury-trial-procedures-for-lawyers-and-litigants.pdf>.
7. Matters assigned under Local Rule 2.6 and Local Rule 10.2 shall remain assigned to their current judges. Parties should contact staff for the assigned judge for those matters.
8. Attorneys and litigants are advised that in-person hearings will be granted for good cause only, and that the judges may use their discretion, inherent power, and authority under the Texas Supreme Court's Emergency Orders to change the format, time, and length of hearings.

9. All pleadings must first be filed with the District or County Clerk's office before requesting a hearing or relief from any court.
10. Any matter submitted to any district judge may be referred to an associate judge where appropriate, or to any other district judge or county court at law judge. A district judge may refer any matter to a county court at law judge and a county court at law judge may refer any matter to a district judge, as is consistent with the Central Docket and the Local Rules.
11. The email addresses for communications with each court are as follows:

53 rd District Court	53.submission@traviscountytx.gov
98 th District Court	98.submission@traviscountytx.gov
126 th District Court	126.submission@traviscountytx.gov
200 th District Court	200.submission@traviscountytx.gov
201 st District Court	201.submission@traviscountytx.gov
250 th District Court	250.submission@traviscountytx.gov
261 st District Court	261.submission@traviscountytx.gov
345 th District Court	345.submission@traviscountytx.gov
353 rd District Court	353.submission@traviscountytx.gov
419 th District Court	419.submission@traviscountytx.gov
455 th District Court	455.submission@traviscountytx.gov
459 th District Court	459.submission@traviscountytx.gov
County Court at Law 1	CCL1.submissions@traviscountytx.gov
County Court at Law 2	CCL2.submissions@traviscountytx.gov
Assoc. Judge Hathcock	TCAJ1.submission@traviscountytx.gov
Assoc. Judge Arth	TCAJ2.submission@traviscountytx.gov
Assoc. Judge de la Llata	TCAJ4.submission@traviscountytx.gov

12. Attorneys and litigants should utilize all forms of technology in order to keep their cases moving, especially with regard to discovery, remote depositions, and pre-trial matters. **Continuances and motions to quash will not be granted solely to avoid remote discovery or hearings. A limited number of "Zoom rooms" may be booked in advance at the courthouse,** where computers are available for attorneys, parties, or witnesses who do not have access to necessary technology. Those needing to reserve a Zoom room for a hearing or trial should contact the Judicial Executive Assistant for the court to which a hearing or trial is assigned.
13. For Child Protective Services (CPS) cases, all statutory review hearings will not occur in-person until the courts find it is reasonably possible to proceed in-person, taking into account the circumstances. The courts will notify parties on those cases needing to be re-set once normal operations resume for in-person hearings. Statutory review hearings may proceed through other means, not in-person, as determined by the presiding judge.
14. Additionally, CPS courts will continue to hold Show Cause, Chapter 262, and Aid to Investigate hearings on Tuesday and Wednesday dockets at the discretion of the judge, and

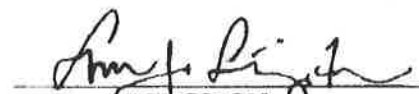
these matters will be primarily by Zoom video conference. Other Contested CPS Matters, including matters set on the CPS Monday Short Dockets and bench trials set on the Central Civil Long Docket, may also proceed virtually if judicially authorized. All other urgent matters requiring rulings shall be submitted to the CPS courts through the Judicial Executive Assistant for which the case is assigned. The email addresses for those Judicial Executive Assistants are as follows:

126 th District Court	Hon. Aurora Martinez Jones	AMJ.Submissions@traviscountytexas.gov
CPS Associate Court	Hon. Leigh Mathews Rodriguez	LMR.Submissions@traviscountytexas.gov

15. This Order does not include Juvenile Court matters, which are subject to the First Amended Order Regarding [Juvenile] Court Proceedings in Response to COVID-19 Emergency, effective March 25, 2020, and the Standing Order Regarding Procedures for Remote Juvenile Court Hearings during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, issued April 8, 2020.
16. Where there are conflicting provisions, this Fourth Amended Emergency Order Regarding COVID-19 supersedes the Travis County Local Rules and any and all Standing Orders.

SIGNED and FILED with District Clerk's and County Clerk's Offices on this 1st day of March, 2021.

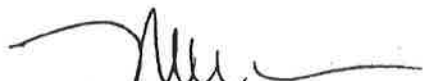

MARIA CANTU HEXSEL
Judge, 53rd District Court

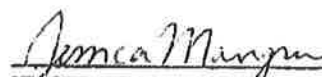

LORA J. LIVINGSTON
Judge, 261st District Court


RHONDA HURLEY
Judge, 98th District Court


JAN SOIFER
Judge, 345th District Court


AURORA MARTINEZ JONES
Judge, 126th District Court

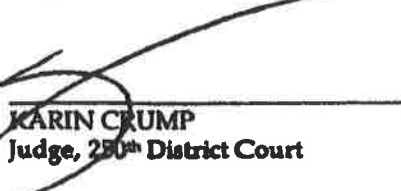

MADELEINE CONNOR
Judge, 353rd District Court


JESSICA MANGRUM
Judge, 200th District Court


CATHERINE A. MAUZY
Judge, 419th District Court


AMY CLARK MEACHUM
Judge 201st District Court


MAYA GUERRA GAMBLE
Judge, 459th District Court


KARIN CRUMP
Judge, 250th District Court


TODD WONG
Judge, County Court at Law #1


ERIC SHEPPERD
Judge, County Court at Law #2