



CURT W. BRANCHEAU

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84TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
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84TH DISTRICT COURT STATEMENT REGARDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

The 84th District Court recognizes the concern about a potential outbreak of COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). The health and safety of employees, attorneys, litigants, and the public remain a paramount concern. The district courts are doing their part to address these concerns in the following manner. Pursuant to the First Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster jointly issued on March 13, 2020, and the Third Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster jointly issued on March 19, 2020, by the Supreme Court of Texas and the Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas, these guidelines are effective until May 8, 2020.

1. Public Health and Maximum Group Size

The district courts will not conduct proceedings which exceed the maximum group size restrictions in effect in Hutchinson County. Anyone who is sick or who thinks they have been exposed to COVID-19 should not come to the courthouse and should contact his or her court by phone or email regarding any questions. Any concerns regarding deadlines set by rule or statute may be extended by the Court as needed in the interest of public health. In other words, please err on the side of caution rather than appear in court due to a time constraint.

2. All Court Matters Will Proceed by Remote Appearance

All court proceedings will proceed by remote appearance via the Zoom app if possible. All essential proceedings will absolutely go forward using the Zoom App. You must contact each court regarding each setting. The courts will do their best to maintain the present schedule of essential and non-essential hearings using the Zoom App.

3. Remote Appearances and the Zoom App

Please note:

- Zoom hearings require an internet device with the Zoom application installed; the service is free. Please familiarize yourself with the application prior to the hearing time.
- The Court rules regarding dress code and decorum still apply. Please note to comply with the Open Courts provision of the Constitution, all hearings will be broadcast on YouTube.
- All exhibits the parties wish to admit at the Zoom hearing must be marked and emailed to opposing counsel and the Court (84@hutchinsoncnty.com) by 2 p.m. the day before the set hearing.

- You will receive an invitation from the Court via email with a link to join the Zoom hearing shortly before the scheduled hearing time.
- Please note in lieu of a 10 and 1:30 docket, the Zoom hearings will be set at specific times throughout business hours by the Court Coordinators.

4. Essential Court Matters

Defined Essential proceedings include, but are not limited to:

- a. Criminal magistration proceedings,
- b. CPS removal hearings,
- c. Temporary restraining orders / temporary injunctions,
- d. Juvenile detention hearings,
- e. Family violence protective orders,
- f. Certain mental health proceedings,
- g. Criminal pleas that will result in the immediate release of the defendant from county jail, and
- h. Any other matters that may be designated by a court at its discretion

5. No Jury Trials

The district courts will not be calling any jury trials during the time this order is in effect.

6. Uncontested Matters by Submission Only

Beginning immediately, no uncontested matters will be heard. All agreed orders and matters that can be heard by submission should be electronically filed.

7. Contact the Courts

Look on your court's website for up to date information. Please be patient and flexible as we are all trying to adapt to a new way of doing things. If you have any questions, please email the court coordinator.

SIGNED on 3/23/20



Curt Brancheau
84th District Court Judge