



## STATE DISTRICT COURTS DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

Sherry Shipman, 16<sup>th</sup> District Court      Bruce McFarling, 362<sup>nd</sup> District Court      Jonathan Bailey, 431<sup>st</sup> District Court  
Steve Burgess, 158<sup>th</sup> District Court      Margaret Barnes, 367<sup>th</sup> District Court      Tiffany Haertling, 442<sup>nd</sup> District Court  
Brody Shanklin, 211<sup>th</sup> District Court      Doug Robison, 393<sup>rd</sup> District Court      Lee Ann Breeding, 462<sup>nd</sup> District Court

### DENTON COUNTY DISTRICT COURTS TEMPORARY GUIDELINES REGARDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Following the guidance from the Office Of Court Administration, and in conjunction with Denton County Public Health, the Denton County District Courts recognize the concerns about COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). As such, the health and safety of the public, and all employees, are of utmost concern and these temporary guidelines are hereby established to address these concerns in the following manner:

These guidelines are effective from March 16, 2020, until April 1, 2020.

#### 1. If a Person is Sick

Everyone who is sick or who thinks they have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact (phone or email) the court to reschedule their hearings or trials. These individuals should not appear in court.

#### 2. Non-Essential Court Matters are Rescheduled

Unless a case is designated below as an Essential Court Matter, all in-person hearings and trials will be rescheduled during the time this order is in effect. Essential Court Matters will proceed. **You must contact each court regarding any setting scheduled during the effective timeframe.**

#### 3. Essential Court Matters Defined

- a. Any suits or hearings with jurisdictional deadlines
- b. Family law cases (including IV-D court):
  - i. Texas Family Code Title 4 – protective orders and family violence
  - ii. Texas Family Code Chapter 157, Subchapter H – habeas corpus and writs of attachment for children
  - iii. Texas Family Code Chapters 261-263 – child welfare suits filed by the government
  - iv. Texas Family Code Chapter 33 – judicial bypass

- v. Texas Family Code Chapter 157 enforcements, only if a respondent is in custody
  - vi. Emergency relief – after reviewing an affidavit, the court may decide to set a hearing on a motion for emergency relief / injunction hearings based on a TRO.
- c. Criminal cases:
- i. Writs of habeas corpus
  - ii. Any dispositive hearing, before the court, where a defendant has requested a speedy trial or speedy disposition
  - iii. Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 17 bond hearings
  - iv. Any time-sensitive hearing required to be conducted by an Appellate Court
  - v. Defendants who are free on bail and represented by counsel need not appear for any announcement setting in person, but the defendant’s lawyer is required to email pass slips to the court with the defendant’s signature within 24 hours after the appearance date. Attorneys representing clients who are in-custody are required to obtain the client’s signature and follow the procedure above. All self-represented individuals are required to appear as usual.
  - vi. Plea dockets will proceed as scheduled by the respective court.
- d. Civil cases:
- i. Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 7A protective orders
  - ii. Temporary restraining orders and temporary injunctions
- e. Juvenile cases:
- i. Texas Family Code Title 3, if a child is in detention
  - ii. Unless set for a trial or plea or a Motion for Deferred, juveniles who are not in custody and their parents/guardians are not required to appear in person for appearance and announcement settings unless the child is not yet represented by counsel. When juveniles are not yet represented by counsel, they and their parents/guardians must appear in court to address the lack of attorney and to get a new setting.
  - iii. Any dispositive hearing where a defendant has requested a speedy trial or speedy disposition
  - iv. Any time-sensitive hearing required to be conducted by an Appellate Court or emergency issues arranged with the Judge and opposing counsel.

f. Any other matters that may be designated by a court at its discretion

#### 4. No Jury Trials

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

#### 5. Uncontested Matters and Prove-Up's by Submission Only

Beginning immediately, no uncontested matters will be heard. **This includes the morning prove-up dockets for each court between 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.** All agreed orders and matters that can be heard by submission should be electronically filed.

#### 6. Electronic Appearances

Courts are developing a plan for electronic appearances which will be placed online as soon as possible. Contact the Court Administrators for specific details.

#### 7. Contact the Courts

Please refer to the Court's / Court Administration's website for more information. If you have any questions, please email the Court Administrator directly.

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE THE ABOVE TEMPORARY GUIDELINES MAY BE REVISED AT ANYTIME.**

[Denton County District Courts](#)

[Denton County District Clerk](#)

SIGNED on March 13, 2020.

/s/ Brody Shanklin

The Honorable Brody Shanklin  
Local Administrative Judge

On Behalf of:

16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Sherry Shipman  
158<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Steven Burgess  
362<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Bruce McFarling  
367<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Margaret Barnes  
393<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Douglas Robison  
431<sup>st</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Jonathan Bailey  
442<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Tiffany Haertling  
462<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Lee Ann Breading  
County Court at Law #1, Sitting as Juvenile  
Court, Hon. Kimberly McCary