

§ IN THE COUNTY COURT AT LAW
§
§ OF
§
§ NAVARRO COUNTY, TEXAS

**STANDING ORDER REGARDING HEARINGS
UNDER THE STATE OF EMERGENCY
FOR NAVARRO COUNTY COURT AT LAW**

The Governor has declared a state of emergency and the Office of Court Administration has recommended that all non-essential court proceedings should be suspended. The Supreme Court has issued emergency orders discouraging in-court personal appearance. Technology and state law allow options not previously available to handle these essential proceedings safely. As such, the Navarro County Court at Law will continue to conduct all essential hearings as well as non-essential hearings, as needed. The following restrictions and limitations will apply, but most are similar to what is required for an in person hearing as we move to a “virtual” hearing platform.

PROCEDURES FOR LITIGANTS:

Effective March 21, 2020, the Navarro County Court at Law will be using ZOOM video conferencing for all court hearings unless the Court specifically orders otherwise. ZOOM is free to download to your computer/laptop/tablet at ZOOM.us or you can download the app directly to your cell phone. **The ZOOM link and specific hearing credentials for the case or docket will be posted to the Court’s daily docket sent out via e-mail.** If you wish to be included on the Court’s daily e-mail docket list, you must contact the Court Coordinator via e-mail at ckirk@navarrocounty.org to request to be added to that list. You must provide your name and correct e-mail address you wish to be added. Once you are added, you will not be removed from the list until the Order is lifted. Once lifted, if you wish to be removed, at that time you may contact the Court via e-mail and request removal.

Your computer must have internet access, a video camera, and speaker/microphone or headset with a microphone.

All documents required for the hearing, including but not limited to plea paperwork, **MUST** be submitted via e-file no later than 11:00 a.m. on the business day **PRIOR** to the hearing. If the required documents are not submitted by that time, the requested hearing will not be placed on the Court’s docket. It will be the attorney and/or the party’s responsibility to make sure the required documentation is properly e-filed. The Court will not contact the District Clerk’s office to request documents be forwarded to the Court’s e-file queue.

If you intend to offer any exhibit during the hearing, any exhibit to be used and/or admitted via audio or video conferencing method must be sent to the Court Reporter at leasley@navarrocounty.org no later than one day prior to the hearing. All document exhibits must in .PDF format. All other exhibits must be in the format required by the Court of Appeals. Further, the exhibit must be in a format easily transmitted to opposing party at the time of use. The Court cannot consider any exhibit not provided to the Court Reporter at least one day prior to the hearing, that does not follow the proper formatting requirements of the Court of Appeals or that is not available at the time the party wishes to use and/or offer the exhibit. If you fail to follow these requirements the Court Reporter will not maintain these documents in the record.

Please remember that although the hearings are occurring via Zoom, the standard rules concerning proper court decorum, demeanor and dress code apply to all video and/or audio hearings. Parties and litigants shall ensure that there will be no disruptions or disturbances from their site. **VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING IS PROHIBITED.** ANY VIOLATION OF THE COURT'S ORDER REGARDING PROHIBITION OF VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING IS SUBJECT TO CONTEMPT OF COURT.

FOR WITNESSES:

All witnesses shall appear via Zoom. It is the responsibility of the attorney or the party calling the witness to ensure that the witness is prepared to proceed via Zoom and that the witness has a separate video and audio feed. No attorney or party shall attempt to "share" a connection with any witness. All witnesses shall have a valid form of identification to verify to the Court their identity. It will be the responsibility of the attorney and/or party calling the witness to ensure that the witness has the proper link to the proceeding prior to the proceeding and that they are available when called to testify.

FOR THE PUBLIC:

THE OPEN COURTS PROVISION OF TEXAS LAW ALLOWS ALL TEXANS ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS. AS SUCH, ANYONE MAY EMAIL THE COURT (ckirk@navarrocounty.org) TO GET ACCESS TO THE DOCKETS TO VIEW AND/OR LISTEN TO HEARINGS. IF YOU ARE VIEWING AND/OR LISTENING TO HEARINGS, YOU MUST MUTE YOUR CONNECTION TO PREVENT DISRUPTION TO THE PROCEEDINGS. THE PUBLIC MAY VIEW OR LISTEN TO PROCEEDINGS, **BUT VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING IS PROHIBITED.** ANY VIOLATION OF THE COURT'S ORDER REGARDING PROHIBITION OF VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING IS SUBJECT TO CONTEMPT OF COURT.

Access to Court proceedings is only available while Court is in session as it is live streaming. No Court proceeding is recorded and retained.

The Court orders that this letter is posted at the Navarro County Courthouse, the Navarro County website and sent via e-mail to the Court's daily docket list.

Ordered this the 27th day of March, 2020



Amanda D. Putman
Judge, County Court at Law