



## 469<sup>th</sup> District Court Rules for Remote Proceedings

The Governor has declared a state of emergency and the Office of Court Administration (OCA) has suggested that all non-critical court proceedings should be suspended. However, technology and state law allows options not previously available. As such the 469<sup>th</sup> District Court of Collin County will continue to conduct hearings if the parties have the technology and desire to do so. The following restrictions and limitations will apply but should be similar to what is required for an in-person hearing. Any non-essential requests for a courtroom hearing will be considered but likely postponed per the current Collin County District Court Joint Statement Regarding Health and Safety Concerns. It is anticipated most parties will agree to a “virtual” hearing.

### **PROCEDURES FOR LITIGANTS:**

The 469<sup>th</sup> District Court will be using Zoom video conferencing. It is free to download at [zoom.us](https://zoom.us) or you can download the app directly to your cell phone. The Court will email you a link to the hearing. Your computer must have internet access, a video camera and a microphone, preferably by way of a headset. **IF YOU CAN ONLY PARTICIPATE VIA TELEPHONE YOU MUST COORDINATE IT WITH THE COURT COORDINATOR AT LEAST 1 HOUR PRIOR TO THE HEARING.**

Ensure the Court Coordinator ([sreynolds@co.collin.tx.us](mailto:sreynolds@co.collin.tx.us)) has the email of all participating parties to the case at the time of scheduling the hearing. The Court will be the “host” of all hearings.

If you intend to offer any exhibits during the hearing you need to email them to all parties, the court reporter ([shunn@co.collin.tx.us](mailto:shunn@co.collin.tx.us)) and the Court Coordinator ([sreynolds@co.collin.tx.us](mailto:sreynolds@co.collin.tx.us)) at least 1 hour prior to the hearing. The subject of the email should be the full cause number and “– Petitioner Exhibits” (or cause number “ – Defendant Exhibits”). The documents should be in .pdf format (unless it is audio and/or video evidence). The Court cannot consider any exhibits not emailed to the court reporter in a timely manner. If you fail to follow this requirement the court reporter, will not maintain these documents in the record. Emailed exhibits are not automatically admitted. Exhibits are still subject to the Texas Rules of Evidence and all other applicable law and/or rules.

### **PROCEDURES FOR WITNESSES:**

Witnesses **MUST** appear by video conferencing. The attorney calling the witness is responsible for ensuring that the witness has a separate video and audio feed. Attorneys should not attempt to “share” a connection with a witness. All witnesses should be prepared to present a valid form of identification to verify their identity to the Court over the video feed. It is the responsibility of the attorney 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.

### **FOR THE PUBLIC:**

THE OPEN COURTS PROVISION OF TEXAS ALLOWS ALL TO HAVE ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS. AS SUCH, ANYONE MAY VIEW THIS COURTS HEARINGS IN THE 469<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT COURTROOM. IN COURT VIEWING IN THE 469<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT COURTROOM WILL BE LIMITED BASED ON SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES. IF NECESSARY, ANOTHER LOCATION WILL BE USED TO ACCOMMODATE ADDITIONAL VIEWERS. **VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING IS PROHIBITED.**