

494th District Court Rules for Remote Hearings,
Including Appearance and Exhibits

Hearings in the 494th District Court are generally conducted in person. To request a Zoom appearance or hearing, you must file a timely motion (a minimum of three days prior to the hearing, not including the hearing date) and the court must sign an order granting such motion.

Zoom is free to download, and you and your witnesses will need to download Zoom at www.zoom.us, or you may download the app directly to your cell phone. The Court will email you a link to the hearing, and will also provide a phone number if a self-represented litigant or witness does not have internet access. Please make sure that you have also updated Zoom to the latest version on the device you use for the hearing.

- (1) **To appear on camera for the Remote Hearing:** You need (1) a computer with internet access and a camera, (2) a laptop with internet access and a camera, or (3) a smartphone with a camera.
- (2) **To participate by phone for a Remote Hearing:** If you only have a telephone, you can still dial into the hearing and the parties can hear you but not see you at the hearing, and you can hear those participating.

Requirements for Using Exhibits at the Remote Hearing:

- (1) If you intend to offer any exhibits during the Remote Hearing, please email them to all parties, the 494th Court's email (494@co.collin.tx.us) and the court's official reporter, Coral Wahlen (cwahlen@co.collin.tx.us), **by noon the day before the hearing**. This is so that the court and court reporter have access to the exhibits during the hearing.
- (2) The subject line of the email should say: Zoom Hearing Exhibits of (Plaintiff/Petitioner/State or Defendant/Respondent) – Cause No. _____.
- (3) Exhibits must be in .pdf format and **pre-marked and titled by Exhibit No.** For example, save each exhibit as a separate pdf, and name each pdf as PEX1, PEX2, etc.

Procedures for Witnesses:

- (1) Witnesses should appear by video conferencing.
- (2) If a witness does not have the capability for video conferencing and can only call in on the phone, then the witness cannot testify regarding any exhibits.

- (3) The attorney calling the witness is responsible for ensuring the witness has a separate video and audio feed.
- (4) Attorneys should not attempt to “share” a connection with a witness.
- (5) All witnesses should be prepared to present a valid form of identification to verify their identity to the Court over the video feed.
- (6) 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 PROVISIONS OF THE TEXAS LAW ALLOWS ALL TEXANS ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS. Remote hearings are live streamed in the courtroom of the 494th District Court, Collin County, Texas. VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING IS PROHIBITED. The public may view the proceeding while it is happening, but is prohibited from recording the proceeding. Anyone who records the proceedings, other than the official court reporter, may be held in contempt of Court.