



Beginning June 1, 2020, the Harris County family courts will begin, on a very limited basis, hearing some **non-essential matters** in person at the courthouse. This does not mean things are “back to normal.” On the contrary, all courthouse activities are still limited by social distancing, maximum group size, elevator capacity, and other restrictions and precautions.

The family court judges will coordinate with each other as much as possible when scheduling in-person hearings to limit the number of people on each of the family court floors. It is anticipated that most courts will conduct docket call remotely, and not in person. Please check with your individual court about their scheduling policies and visit their website.

I want to thank the attorneys and litigants for being patient and I ask that you please continue to be flexible and patient through this process. While we are limited by social distancing restrictions, **please do not appear in person at the courthouse for a hearing unless you have prior verification from the respective court that your case is set for an in-person hearing**. Also, please do not plan to use your time in the courthouse to settle your case with an opposing side. Make your attempts to settle before your court appearance. The hallways will be subject to social distancing. Consequently, you will not be able to cluster in the hallways to talk about a case.

Any time that you do appear in the courthouse, please note that all participants, including attorneys, paralegals, parties, witnesses, and observers should bring and be prepared to wear a face covering.

The courts will also make reasonable accommodations for attorneys, litigants, and witnesses who are part of **vulnerable populations**, meaning individuals who are 65 or older and individuals with serious health conditions.

On a final note, I recommend that each attorney and litigant carefully read the Texas Supreme Court’s *17th Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster*, released on May 26, 2020, <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446702/209071.pdf>, as it provides guidelines that the courts must follow for the near future.

I expect that each individual court will have its revised procedures up on their court’s websites in the next week or so. When in doubt, check with the individual court with your questions.

Thank you,
Julia Maldonado
Administrative Judge-Family Division

05-28-2020