

ALL CASES

IN RE: PUBLIC HEALTH	§	IN THE DISTRICT COURT
	§	
GENERAL ORDER	§	HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS
	§	
2020-04-07	§	189TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

ORDER

Whereas in March 2020, based on growing public health concerns in Harris County arising from COVID-19 with various governmental authorities from the President of the United States down declaring a state of emergency,

It is ORDERED as follows:

1. All jury and bench trials in the 189th District Court shall not be tried in the month of March, April or May 2020. The court shall reset these March, April and May trials no sooner than August 3, 2020. To the extent any of these March, April or May trials have preferential settings, the parties shall contact the court's Trial Coordinator Arionne McNeal at 832-927-2346/ arionne.mcneal@justex.net to have their case reset by agreement on a preferential basis on or after August 3, 2020;
2. All trial settings from June 2020 forward shall remain on the court's docket until further notice. The court is monitoring the COVID-19 situation and shall keep the parties informed as to whether the June trial docket shall be similarly reset or not. The parties are directed to check the court's website under "*COVID 19 Orders*" for posted notices concerning the June forward 2020 dockets. The parties may also look-up the status of their two week trial docket by going to the court's website under "*Current and Future Trial Dockets*," selecting the first Monday of their two week docket and pressing the "*Submit*" button.

3. All oral hearings (which by definition involve an in court appearance by counsel or self-represented parties) from March 16, 2020 to May 17, 2020 shall only be heard by written submission – no in court appearance or telephonic hearings. The court will resume oral hearings on May 18, 2020 but anticipates conducting those hearings remotely via Zoom or other remote technology. Parties desiring an oral hearing which has been converted to a submission hearing by this ORDER must re-schedule their oral hearing on or after May 18, 2020 with notice to all parties. Oral hearings may be reset by contacting the court’s clerk Dee Mosley at 832-927-2325/ deandra.mosley@hcdistrictclerk.com. Parties and counsel are encouraged to use the court’s eHearing feature to set their hearings electronically without calling the clerk. eHearing instructions and computer interfaces appear on the District Clerk’s website at www.hcdistrictclerk.com. After logging in, go to “*Online Services*,” select “*My Filings*” and follow the selection options to schedule an eHearing on one of your filings;
4. The court will continue to conduct emergency motions and Essential Court Matters (temporary restraining orders, temporary injunctions, Chapter 33 and Chapter 81) by telephone conference. Cancellation of an oral hearing pursuant to this ORDER standing alone is not a sufficient basis for a matter to be heard telephonically on an emergency basis. Should a party have a compelling reason for an in court appearance, they may petition the court consistent with the Alternate Schedule directives below.
5. The court is following the **Harris County District Courts – Civil Division Alternate Schedule** released on March 16, 2020 and in effect until June 1, 2020 subject to extension which states as follows:

**“Harris County District Courts – Civil Division
Alternate Schedule**

Pursuant to Section 2 of the Harris County District Courts

Inclement Weather, Emergency, and Public Health Scheduling Procedures, the Civil Division adopts this alternative schedule.

- Submission Dockets will proceed as scheduled.
- Telephonic and Video Hearings will proceed as scheduled.
- All previously set, non-essential in-person, oral (non-telephonic) hearings and dockets are cancelled.¹ Please contact the Court to reschedule your oral hearing for a later date or alternative method, unless the Court has already contacted you. Courts will *consider* conducting an oral (non-telephonic) hearing if: (1) all parties agree that such a hearing is necessary; (2) the parties file an agreed motion requesting an oral hearing; and (3) the motion sets forth a compelling reason supporting the request and explaining why no other means is adequate to resolve the issue for which the parties seek an oral hearing.
- All Essential Court Matters (temporary restraining orders, temporary injunctions, Chapter 33 and Chapter 81) will proceed as scheduled. Contact the specific Court regarding the details of when and where the hearing will proceed. If a party believes their hearing needs to be classified as an Essential Matter, please contact the specific Court.
- All tax court proceedings are cancelled.

As always, if during this public health emergency you are unable to attend any hearing or conference or need other accommodation from the Court, please contact the Court.

This Alternate Schedule shall be in place until June 1, 2020 or until the Board of District Judges – Civil Division amends or suspends this schedule.

If any Court wishes to opt-out of this Alternate Schedule, the Court Administrator shall post those specific Courts' procedures to Justex.net.”

¹ Since oral hearings in the 189th were converted to submission only via the March 12, 2020, March 19, 2020 and April 7, 2020 ORDERS, this cancellation provision is inapplicable to the 189th's hearing docket. All hearings subject to this ORDER shall be heard by submission unless otherwise re-set consist with the 189th's ORDERS.

Signed this 7th day of April, 2020.

/s/ Scot G. Dollinger

Judge Scot “dolli” Dollinger

189th Civil District Court