

ZOOM VIDEO COURTROOM PROCEDURES FOR THE 257th DISTRICT COURT
MARCH 25, 2020

On March 24, 2020, Harris County Judge, Lina Hidalgo, issued a “Stay Home, Work Safe Order” that went into effect Wednesday, March 25, 2020, and will stay in effect at least until April 3rd. In addition, on March 13, 2020, the Texas Supreme Court issued its *First Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster*. **Therefore, effective immediately until further notice, the 257th District Court will conduct judicial proceedings online via Zoom Video Conferencing. The procedures will be as follows:**

1. **Scheduling A Hearing** – File a motion with our court for all Zoom hearing requests with a copy of your request to all counsel and self-represented parties. Hearing requests **SHALL** include the following:
 - a. Name of the requesting attorney and party they represent;
 - b. A statement regarding whether the request for a Zoom hearing is **AGREED** by all counsel/parties. (If agreed, a remote proceeding may be set. If contested, a “Motion for Use of Emergency Procedures” may be filed, which shall be heard by Zoom hearing);
 - c. Type of hearing requested;
 - d. Whether an interpreter is necessary and the required language, and;
 - e. Total time anticipated for the Zoom hearing (for all parties).

2. All exhibits must be E-filed no less than 24 hours prior to the hearing date and all exhibits must be stipulated to or contested. In addition to E-filing exhibits, please email exhibits to angela_mcbride@justex.net. Any additional exhibits, offered and admitted during the hearing, must be submitted within 30 minutes of the conclusion of the proceeding.

3. If requesting a record, attorneys on both sides must complete a court reporter form individually and email the form to angela_mcbride@justex.net no less than 24 hours prior to the hearing date. In addition, attorneys should be mindful that there may be lag in communication that may cause difficulty in obtaining an accurate record. Therefore, it is imperative that counsel refrain from talking over one another and advise their clients as well.

4. **Defaults** – Any matter in which a default is anticipated (including a no answer default) will require the filing of a Motion of Intent to take Default and a subsequent hearing.

That motion must be set on Schedulista. The coordinator will then schedule a Zoom hearing and notify counsel of the meeting details.

Once counsel obtains the meeting number for the Zoom hearing, notice of that hearing must be sent via 21a notice to the respondent at the address where the respondent was served and any other address where the respondent might be found.

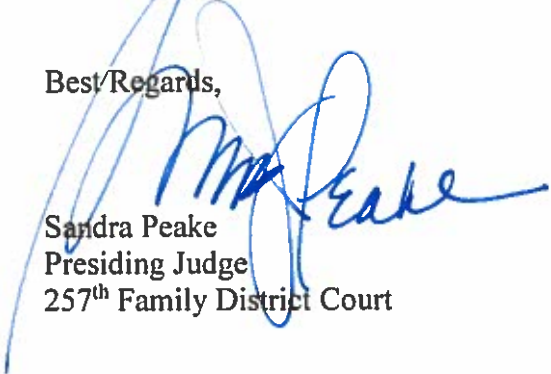
The final default order must be filed in the court's file and the court reporter must have a request for a record with the accompanying exhibits (certificate of last known address, military affidavit) at least 24 hours before the scheduled hearing.

5. Generally, meeting participants are to comport themselves in the same manner as they would in a physical courtroom proceeding. This includes but is not limited to: (1) professional appearance; (2) courtroom civility; (3) attending meetings in a silent and controlled environment; (4) refraining from using any outside, unauthorized technology other than what is being used to attend the meeting; (5) refrain from recording the meeting, in whole or in part; (6) be attentive and visible at all times during the proceedings; and (7) speak loud and clear in order for others in the meeting to hear you and for the record. This list is not exhaustive.

6. As a reminder, attorneys should keep their microphone muted to minimize feedback and to prevent others in the meeting from hearing unintended communication. Furthermore, meeting participants should eliminate all background noise and visible distractions in order to help achieve an efficient and productive meeting.

As the COVID-19 situation continues to change, the 257th District Court may make additional modifications of its procedures. Please continue to monitor the court's website for any updates.

Best/Regards,



Sandra Peake
Presiding Judge
257th Family District Court

March 25, 2020

CAUSE NO. _____

IN THE MATTER OF
THE MARRIAGE OF

AND

AND IN THE INTEREST OF

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IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF

HARRIS COUNTY, T E X A S

257TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that this matter is set for hearing on the ____ day of _____, 2020, at ____:____ a.m./p.m. (CST).

The hearing will be conducted via Zoom Video Conference.

To appear and participate in this hearing via Zoom, you must have an electronic device with an internet connection. You may use a smart phone, iPad, tablet, desktop or laptop computer with a built-in webcam/microphone. It shall be the responsibility of counsel and self-represented parties to download the Zoom app prior to a proceeding and to ensure that all hearing participants have the ability to participate. Zoom is a FREE DOWNLOAD available at: <https://zoom.us/download>.

Before the hearing, a confirmation letter will be sent to you via e-mail with the following relevant information.

MEETING ID: _____ - _____ - _____

To join the hearing via Zoom:

Please go to: <https://txcourts.zoom.us/join>

Then type in the above-referenced Meeting ID.

It is the responsibility of the attorney or self-represented party seeking the hearing to notice all parties of the Zoom Video Conference's Meeting ID.

Clerk of the 257th Judicial District Court
