

**GENERAL ORDER REGARDING REMOTE DETENTION HEARINGS
IN THE COUNTY COURT AT LAW
OF
WALKER COUNTY, TEXAS**

I. Plan Adoption

In accordance with Texas Family Code §54.012, the County Court at Law of Walker County, adopts the following plan to conduct detention hearings are remote proceedings.

II. Definitions

- A. Detention hearings have the same meaning, scope and requirements listed in §54.01 of the Texas Family Code.
- B. Remote Proceeding means a proceeding in which one or more of the participants, including a judge, party, attorney, witness, court reporter or other individual attends the proceeding remotely through the use of technology and the internet, including through teleconferencing or video conferencing.

III. Procedures for Detention Hearings Conducted as a Remote Proceeding

- A. The court may, in its discretion, proceed with remote detention hearings, pursuant to §54.01(a) of the Texas Family Code. Consistent with constitutional requirements, the court may allow or require any party, attorney, witness or court reporter and may allow any party or parties to participate in a detention hearing as a remote proceeding.
- B. The parties to the detention hearing shall have the opportunity to cross-examine any witnesses called during the hearing.
- C. The camera of any party or witness who provides testimony must provide an unobstructed view of the party or witness providing testimony. An unobstructed view, for the purposes of this plan, means that the individual can be clearly seen, identified and heard without any barrier other than a clean camera lens. Consistent with constitutional confrontation requirements, if a party or witness is not on camera, or cannot be clearly seen, the court will not allow the person to testify or continue to testify unless the witness complies with the requirement of an unobstructed view.

D. Presentation and retention of physical evidence during remote proceeding detention hearings will be conducted as follows:

- a. Any physical evidence offered at a remote proceeding detention hearing must be displayed so that the court, attorneys, parties and witness can view it simultaneously.
- b. When digital copies of physical evidence can be prepared, such as audio/video recordings, documents or images, the digital copies should be emailed to the court at wccl@co.walker.tx.us and to counsel for the parties before the hearing if practicable.
- c. Evidence formatting must comply with the *General Order Regarding Evidence In the District Courts and County Court at Law of Walker County, Texas* signed on June 7, 2023.
- d. Physical evidence which cannot be rendered in digital form shall be tendered to the court no later than two days after the remote proceeding if the party offering the evidence is not present in the court when it is offered.

IV. Submission to Office of Court Administration

In accordance with Texas Family Code §54.012, this plan was submitted to the Texas Office of Court Administration (OCA) on November 14, 2023 by posting on <https://www.txcourts.gov/rules-forms/local-rules-forms-and-standing-orders/>.

Signed this the 14th day of November, 2023.



Judge Tracy Sorensen
Walker County Court at Law