



**BEFORE THE PRESIDING JUDGE
OF THE FIFTH ADMINISTRATIVE JUDICIAL REGION OF TEXAS
NO. 18-5AJR-314**

**ORDER APPROVING STARR COUNTY LOCAL RULES
AND RECOMMENDING APPROVAL BY THE SUPREME COURT**

The Council of District Judge and County Court-at-Law Judges of Starr County have submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Fifth Administrative Judicial Region their proposed revised Local Rules for approval and for recommendation to the Supreme Court of Texas. Having fully reviewed said Rules, the Presiding Judge hereby approves of their adoption. The Presiding Judge also recommends that the Supreme Court of Texas approve said Local Rules.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the revised Local Rules of the District Courts and County Courts-at-Law of Jim Wells & Nueces County, Texas, be and are hereby approved by the Presiding Judge of the Fifth Administrative Judicial Region, and recommend to the Supreme Court of Texas that said Supreme Court approve the revised Local Rules of the District Courts and County Courts-at-Law of Jim Wells & Brooks County, Texas.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Administrative Assistant shall forward to the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Texas this Order and the revised Local Rules of the District Courts and County Courts-at-Law of Jim Wells & Brooks County, Texas for its consideration and action.

So Ordered on August 9, 2018.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Missy Medary", written over a horizontal line.

**MISSY MEDARY
PRESIDING JUDGE, FIFTH ADMINISTRATIVE JUDICIAL REGION**

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emily R. Moore", written over a horizontal line.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

STARR COUNTY

LOCAL RULES FOR THE JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURTS

Rule 1. Application.

These rules shall apply to civil and criminal cases pending before the District Courts of Starr County and, in part, in the County Court at Law of Starr County. It is not the intent of these rules to impinge on the authority or jurisdiction of any Judge or Court established by the Constitution or the Statutes of this State or the Supreme Court of Texas.

Rule 2. Definitions

1. "Court" means any District Court or County Court at Law established by law for Starr County.
2. "Judge" means the Judge of any District Court or County Court at Law in Starr County.
3. The "Local Administrative District Judge" is elected by the District Judges.
 - a. The election of the Local Administrative District Judge is on the last Friday in January of every odd numbered year.
 - b. Upon certification of any District Judge that the vote for the election of the Local Administrative District Judge resulted in a tie, the Presiding Judge of the Fifth Administrative Judicial Region shall cast a vote for the election of the Local Administrative District Judge.
 - c. The Local Administrative District Judge serves for a term of two years beginning on February 1 of each odd numbered year.
 - d. The Local Administrative District Judge shall be responsible for all administrative matters relating to the District Courts (as distinguished from judicial matters). The Local Administrative Presiding Judge shall supervise the assignment of cases to the various district courts, and shall have all other necessary powers, both express or implied, to execute, implement and perform the duties set forth in Government Code Chapter 74, the Supreme Court Rules of Judicial Administration and the rules promulgated by the Regional Presiding Judge.
4. The "Local Administrative Statutory County Court Judge" is the Judge of the County Court at Law and performs the duties set out in Sec. 74.092, Texas Government Code.
5. "District Clerk" means the District Clerk of Starr County.
6. "Clerk means and includes the District Clerk and any deputy district clerks of Starr County.

7. "Clerk of the Court" means a deputy district Clerk assigned by the District Clerk to serve the Court during any sessions of the Court, whether for an extended term or a day to day basis.

8. "Court Coordinator" means and includes—the Court Coordinator and the Court Administrator appointed by each respective Court.

9. "Reporter" means the Official Court Reporter appointed by the Judge of each respective Court.

10. "Bailiff" means the Bailiff appointed by appointed by the Judge of each respective Court.

11. A Court Coordinator, Court Reporter or Bailiff is not a "Clerk of the Court."

Rule 3. Assignment of Cases.

1. Cases within the exclusive jurisdiction of the District Court and all felony and indicted cases shall be filed in the District Court at random and in equal numbers.

2. Civil cases not within the concurrent jurisdiction of the District Court and the County Court-at-Law shall be assigned by the District Clerk only to the District Courts at random and in equal numbers.

3. All Family law cases, civil cases with plead damages \$100,000.00 or less, and misdemeanor cases shall be filed with the County Court-at-Law.

4. Effective January 1, 2019, each case filed with the District Clerk shall be given a unique case number in the following format:

- a. The first two digits shall be the last two digits of the year in which the case is filed;
- b. Two or three letters will then follow to indicate whether the case is a civil case, namely "CV", or a criminal case, "CR" or "CRS," a family case, "FM", or a tax case, "TAX;"
- c. a five-digit number, with the first case filed each January with the number 00001, with each case thereafter numbered sequentially;
- d. For criminal cases that are assigned to the 229th Judicial District Court, they shall be given the designation of "CRS." For criminal cases that are assigned to the 381st Judicial District Court, they shall be given the designation of "CR."

Rule 4. Notice Concerning Orders of Assignment from Regional Presiding Judge.

1. The Clerk shall, if it is reasonable and practicable and if time permits, give notice of the assignment of a visiting Judge to each attorney representing a party to the case assigned or during the period of the assignment.

2. The Clerk shall post a copy of the Order of Assignment in the public notice section of the offices of the District Clerk and of the Court.

Rule 5. Electronically Transmitted Pleadings, Documents and Court Orders.

1. Pleadings, Documents, and Court Orders may be filed by electronic transmission with the appropriate Clerk, and shall be recognized and treated as originals, subject to 51.806(b), Texas Government Code.

2. The Clerk shall separately maintain such pleadings, documents and orders received, subject to transfer.

3. Pleadings and documents electronically transmitted for filing must be addressed to the District Clerk. The District Clerk or deputy clerk shall not be responsible for the misfiling of such pleadings or documents, nor for incompetent transmissions.

4. It shall be incumbent upon the sender to personally review the Clerk's files to insure the integrity or existence of electronically transmitted pleadings or documents.

5. The Clerk shall file stamp such pleadings and documents in the same manner as the original papers are handled, on the next business day, showing the actual time received.

6. Senders of electronically transmitted pleadings or documents must maintain or file the originals, as may be required by law.

7. A cover sheet shall accompany such transmissions, identifying the sender, the case in which the pleadings or documents are to be filed, the nature of the pleadings or documents, the number of pages being transmitted including the cover sheet, and any special filing, service or dispositional instructions.

8. Returns of service and bonds may not be filed electronically, unless permitted by law or Rules promulgated by the Supreme Court of Texas. The originals must be filed with the District Clerk for placement in the Court file.

9. Court costs and fees for such filings are due when the pleading is received and may be paid in cash, credit card, check, or money order, or may be credited against court costs posted in advance by a party; but filing fees must be paid or assessed against a credit card not later than seven (7) days of the filing.

10. Court Orders may be electronically transmitted to the Clerk for filing. In this instance, electronically transmitted includes e-mail and facsimile transmission. The Court will include a cover page with any facsimile transmitted Orders. The Clerk will accept and file the transmitted Court Order according to these and other Rules promulgated by the Texas Supreme Court.

11. The Clerk shall not reject any pleading on their own determination unless given authority to reject under the order promulgated by the Supreme Court of Texas concerning the electronic filing. Any filings that may not comply with other rules are only rejected by order of the Court.

12. Child Protection cases shall take priority and be addressed immediately by the Clerk. Any filing made by an agent of the State of Texas, including but not limited to any filing done by the County Attorney, Texas Attorney General or Department of Family and Protective Services, shall be reviewed and filed within 1 hour of the filing, or if filed after hours, within 1 hour of receipt of the filing the next business day. If the filing made by an agent of the State of Texas is requesting emergency relief, the Clerk will review the document within 1 hour of filing. If the filing is rejected (rejection may only occur for the document not conforming with the filing requirements as mandated by the Supreme Court of Texas), the Clerk shall immediately notify the agent why the filing does not conform to the requirements as mandated by the Supreme Court of Texas. This notice will be done by email and telephone. Once the filing has been either accepted or corrected and accepted, the Clerk shall submit all orders associated with the emergency filing to the CPS Court's signing queue within 1 hour of the filings acceptance and will notify the CPS Court that said orders are in the queue by email and telephone. If an emergency filing is rejected, the Court, because of the emergency basis of the request, shall have the authority to review copies of a rejected filing (with or without regard to whether the case has been assigned a cause number). The Court shall grant or deny the emergency orders and e-mail copies to the Clerk and County Attorney for filing the next business day. The Clerk shall make copies of the signed Orders available to the agent no later than 4:45 pm the same day the Order is filed.

Rule 6. Transfer of Civil Cases within the Courts

1. Whenever any pending case is related to another case pending, dismissed, non-suited, or disposed of by another court, the Judge of either Court, acting as judge of either Court, shall, upon motion (including the Court's own motion) and notice, transfer the case to the Court in which the earlier case was filed to facilitate the orderly and efficient disposition of the litigation. The following types of cases shall be subject to transfer under this rule, but this listing is not exclusive and is given by way of example only:

a. Any case arising out of the same transaction or occurrence as did an earlier case, particularly if the earlier case was dismissed for want of prosecution or voluntarily dismissed by Plaintiff at any time before final judgment.

b. Any case involving one or more of the same parties as an earlier filed case and requiring a determination of any of the same questions of fact or of law as those involved in the earlier case.

c. Any case involving a plea that a judgment in the earlier filed case is conclusive of any of the issues of the latter case by way of *res judicata* or estoppel by judgment, or any pleading that requires a construction of the earlier signed judgment or a determination of its effect.

d. Any suit concerning the duty of an insurer to defend.

e. Whenever a case is transferred to Starr County by a Court of another county, it shall be assigned in the manner specified by these Rules.

f. Regardless of which case was filed first, any suit affecting the parent-child relationship shall be transferred to the Court in which a divorce action involving the parties named in the suit affecting the parent-child relationship is pending.

2. Every motion for consolidation or joint hearing of two or more cases under Rules 39, 40, 41, 174(a), Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, shall be filed in the Court in which the earliest case was filed.

3. No civil case may be transferred from a District Court to the County Court-at-Law, or from a County Court-at-Law to a District Court, without the prior consent of the parties and receiving Court.

4. Transfers will not be questioned or challenged by anyone other than a party to a case that is being transferred from a District Court to the County Court-at-Law or vice versa.

5. On cases that are transferred between courts, no additional fees will be added to what the party has already been charged and paid other than any difference between the filing fees of the courts.

6. The District Clerk and/or its deputies shall scan and e-file pro se pleadings as per electronic filing rules. The District Clerk and/or its deputies will help pro se litigants with any filing procedures, including any e-filing procedures.

7. Once a pleading or motion is filed with the Clerk, the Clerk shall accept the filing, shall file stamp the document with the date and time that it was filed, shall sign and print his or her name thereto.

8. Cases that are non-suited and later re-filed will be transferred to the Court where the earlier case had been randomly assigned.

Rule 7. Pre-Trial Procedures.

1. Settings for any matter to be heard by the Court shall be obtained from the Court Coordinator. Docket Control conferences, pre-trial conferences, and hearings shall be attended by the attorney for the party who is authorized to act for the party taking those actions listed in Rule 166, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

2. The Court Pre-Trial Order shall reflect action taken at any pre-trial conference which order shall control the proceedings until the matter is finally disposed of or modified by the Court.

3. Court Orders that contain notice for settings shall be obtained and sent out by the Clerk. Docket Control Conference notices, or other pre-trial notices may be obtained by the Court Coordinator.

Rule 8. Duties of District Clerk and Deputy District Clerks

1. The District Clerk is the custodian of the cases filed with the District Courts and of those cases in which the District Courts and the County Court at Law have concurrent jurisdiction.
2. The District Clerk and the Deputy District Clerks serve the Courts.
3. The District Clerk shall place each filed case in a separate paper file or electronic file.
4. The Clerk of each Court shall timely deliver all paper case files to the courtroom prior to any session of the Court and shall return the files to the District Clerk after the Court is done with the cases, unless the Judge chooses to retain a file or files for further review for such time as the Judge may require.
5. The Clerk of each court shall give access to the Judge and the staff of the Court for any cases filed electronically or in digital format, including giving any password or code number to open, view, access and print any document from any such file. Court will have discretion on printing documents for court appointed attorneys and other non-court or non-government entities.
6. At the direction of the Court or the staff of the Court, the Clerk of the Court, or any other deputy district clerk when the Clerk of the Court is not available, shall deliver within the time set by the Judge or a member of the staff of the Court any case file or files to the offices of the Court for review by the Judge or the staff of the Court. The Judge may retain the file in chambers, a staff member may retain the file in the Court offices, for such review and for such time as the Judge or the staff deems appropriate and necessary.
7. At any time, the Court Coordinators and the Reporter shall have access to any case files and any documents in any case file in the custody of the District Clerk.
8. The Court Coordinators, Court Reporters, and the Community Supervision/Probation department shall have access to I-Docket, including having the password, code number or such other means to access the I-Docket. The Court Coordinators and Court Reporters shall have access and the ability to call I-Docket tech support as may be deemed necessary. The District Clerk nor any of the deputies shall prohibit the Court Coordinators, nor Court Reporters or the Bailiffs from having access to the I-Docket tech support. This rule also includes the ability to print any document from I-Docket.

Rule 9. Severance.

1. Causes severed shall be assigned a new case number and shall be filed in the same Court.
2. The severed case shall be assigned to the Court that granted the severance.

Rule 10. Temporary, Emergency, and Ex Parte Orders.

1. Except as provided in Rule 10.2, no applications for immediate or temporary relief, shall be presented to a Judge until the case has been filed and assigned to a Court as provided by these Rules.

2. When the office of the District Clerk is not open for business or during any officially declared emergency, a Judge may receive an application for immediate or temporary relief and grant such relief as the Judge deems appropriate. The pleadings and the Order, if any, shall be filed with the District Clerk the next business day and, if necessary, process shall issue as provided by law. If the case is assigned to a Court that is not the Court of the Judge who considered the matter, the case shall remain with the Court in which the case was assigned.

3. If the Judge of the Court to which such case is assigned is absent or is occupied with other matters, such application may be presented to another District Court Judge or judge of a court of concurrent jurisdiction, who may sit for the Judge of the Court in which the case is pending, and shall make all orders, writs, and process returnable to that Court. Hearings on applications for temporary injunctions, temporary receiverships, and the like shall be set in the Court to which the case has been assigned.

4. All applications for *ex parte* relief shall state, and it shall be brought to the attention of the Court, whether, within the knowledge of the applicant, the opposing party is represented by counsel, who shall be allowed to appear if practicable. The party requesting such temporary relief shall be present in Court at the time such relief is requested to offer testimony, if necessary, unless the Court finds that such presence is not necessary.

5. If the County Court-at-Law Judge is unavailable in a case in which immediate relief is requested, any District Judge of the County may sit as the Judge of the County Court at Law to hear and/or consider the application. The case so heard and/or considered shall remain in the County Court at Law docket.

6. If the Judge of a Court is not available at the time set for a hearing, another Judge having jurisdiction over the case may hear the application for relief.

Rule 11. Uncontested cases and motions.

1. Parties and/or counsel present in Court to announce the settlement of cases or motions shall be heard first on the Court's Docket each day.

2. Uncontested matters shall be given priority and shall be heard before contested matters.

Rule 12. Criminal Cases; Assignment of related prosecutions.

1. After random assignment, the District Clerk shall reassign any new indictment or information in a Felony case to the Court having a lower pending case number on the same defendant by order of the Court. The Order shall reflect that the transfer is pursuant to this Local Rule by any Judge with criminal case jurisdiction.

2. When an indictment or information in a felony case is dismissed, the District Clerk shall reassign any subsequently filed indictment or information of the same cause against the same defendant, to the Court in which the prior indictment or information was assigned. In cases where a defendant is on community supervision, when a Motion to Revoke is filed due to a new indictment, the newly indicted case will be transferred to the same court where supervision is currently taking place.

3. When the grand jury returns an amended indictment or adds counts to the original indictment, the new indictment is a superseding indictment and shall be filed in the same case with the same cause number, except that the designation "S1" shall be added to the case number. If a second superseding indictment is filed, the new indictment shall be given the "S2" designation, and so forth. The State shall notify the District Clerk of any amended indictments or added counts to a current indictment at the earliest practicable time.

4. All filings under the original indicted cause shall be subsumed and included into the superseding indicted cause.

Rule 13. Protocol for Determining Priority of Cases set for Trial.

The following rules determine the priority of the trial of cases in a court and between the two District Courts.

1. General Rules

- a. A jury trial case takes precedence over a non-jury trial or hearing.
- b. A criminal case takes precedence over all other cases.
- c. A family jury trial, whether in the County Court at Law or in a District Court, takes precedence over any civil jury case.
- d. Where two courts each have a jury trial on the same date with the same lawyer or lawyers, the court having the oldest filed case takes precedence.

2. Criminal Cases

The District Courts shall give priority to criminal cases set for trial for a defense attorney who represents two or more defendants whose cases have the same trial date, as follows:

- a. If one defendant is in jail and the other is not in jail, the case with the jailed defendant shall take precedence.
- b. If two or more defendants in different cases are each in jail, the case with the defendant having the longer continuous jail time shall take precedence.

- c. If two or more defendants in different cases are each in jail, have the same continuous jail time, and have the same trial date, the case with the earlier date of offense shall take precedence.
- d. If two or more defendants in different cases are each in jail, have the same continuous jail time, have the same trial date, and have the same date of offense, the case with the earlier filed date of indictment shall take precedence.
- e. If two or more defendants in different cases are each in jail, have the same continuous jail time, have the same trial date, have the same date of offense, and have the same filed date of indictment, the case with the higher grade of offense shall take precedence.
- f. If two or more defendants in different cases are each in jail, have the same continuous jail time, have the same trial date, have the same date of offense, have the same filed date of indictment, and have the same grade of offense, the case charging an offense of violence against another shall take precedence.
- g. If one case is a felony and the other case is a misdemeanor, the felony case shall take precedence.
- h. If both defendants in different cases are on bail, the protocol for jailed defendants as set forth above shall determine which case takes precedence.

3. Civil Cases

- a. When a lawyer has two or more different cases with the same trial date in the same court, the oldest filed case shall take precedence.
- b. When a lawyer has two or more different cases with the same trial date in different courts, the court with the oldest filed case shall take precedence.

4. Special or Preferential Settings.

- a. A District Court Judge may give any case a special or preferential trial setting.
- b. In the Order giving a case a special or preferential trial setting, the Court shall state specific reasons for such setting. *{Comment: A court should not give just any case a special or preferential setting. Nor should a court give a case preference just because counsel request it or only to accommodate counsel. Examples for which a court may give a case preference include, but are not limited to, a capital murder case in which the State seeks the death penalty; a class action case; a complex case; a case realistically expected to take two or more weeks; a case with numerous out-of-county witnesses; a case that has been reset three or more times, in part because of the application of these rules.}*

5. Conflict Between Jury Trials and Non-jury settings.

a. A Court involved in a jury trial may, but need not, accommodate trial counsel to attend to a non-jury hearing in this county that was previously set.

b. A Court involved in a jury trial will not accommodate trial counsel to attend to a non-jury hearing in another county that was previously set except for good cause.

6. Judges May Confer to Determine Precedence of Cases.

a. The Judges of the Courts affected by conflicting jury trial settings of counsel may confer to determine the precedence of the cases for trial. The conference the need not be on the record.

b. Upon request of counsel and at the discretion of the Judges, counsel may attend a Judges' conference to determine the precedence of conflicting jury trial settings of counsel. At the request of counsel, the conference may be on the record.

7. Duty of Counsel

a. Counsel of record have a duty to timely and promptly inform the affected Courts of any conflicting jury trial settings or other settings.

b. Counsel must state in writing to each of the affected Courts whether he or she is ready for trial in all cases set for trial on the same date, and, if not ready in one or more of said cases, why he or she is not ready for trial.

c. Counsel shall state, whether in a motion for continuance or a notice of conflicting jury trial settings, which case has priority under these Rules.

d. The mere setting of a case for jury trial on a date that counsel already has a jury trial setting in another case in another Court is not, in and of itself, a basis for a continuance of either or both cases.

Rule 14. Court Staff.

a. Each Judge shall control the employees of the Court over which he or she presides, including adjunct employees/belonging to other departments, such as the office of the District Clerk or of the Community Supervisions and Corrections Department rendering services directly to each court.

b. Court Staff includes the Court Coordinators, bailiff, court reporter(s), and such other staff necessary to support the Court, including the Clerk of the Court or any other deputy district clerk assigned to the Court, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Judge.

Rule 15. Impaneling Juries.

- a. The District Clerk shall send out juror summons notices as directed by the Local Administrative District Judge or the Local Administrative Statutory Court Judge.
- b. The District Clerk shall prepare the lists for petit juror panels for each Court. The petit jurors shall be randomly listed.
- c. On juror impaneling/qualification day, the District Clerk shall check in the jurors set for jury duty and assemble them in the appropriate panel(s).
- d. All requests to be released from jury duty, including those made mandatory under the Government Code, must be presented to the District Court for which the juror was requested for service.

Rule 16. Appointment Process.

1. The Court shall place the name of an attorney who has qualified for appointment as an *ad litem*, guardian *ad litem* or an *amicus* attorney on a list of qualified attorneys at the time of qualification. The Court shall appoint an individual from the appointment list using a system of rotation. The Court shall appoint the attorney whose name next appears on the appointment list.
2. The Court may appoint an attorney who is not next on the appointment list when:
 - a. due to the complexity of the case, the attorney does not possess necessary expertise and experience in a particular area relating to the pending litigation; or
 - b. for any other reason that the trial Court deems necessary in the interest of justice.
3. An attorney who is not appointed in the order in which the attorney's name appears on the list shall remain next in order on the list.
4. In criminal cases, the Court shall appoint attorneys as per by the public defender grant requirements.
5. Each Court shall maintain appointment lists for its Court as may be required by law.

Rule 17. Notification of Appointment.

1. The District Clerk or one of its deputies shall promptly send the attorney the Order of appointment. The Court shall promptly inform the attorney of the appointment under these rules.
2. The appointed attorney may be informed by telephone, fax, email, in person or by any other means likely to give the appointee notice of the appointment.

Rule 18. Duties of Appointed Attorney.

1. In additions to duties mandated by law, appointed attorneys shall make every reasonable effort to do the following from the date of appointment:

a. contact the client by the end of the next business day after appointment and interview the client as soon as practicable thereafter; and,

b. contact all parties, or their legal counsel of record, if represented, as soon as practicable to obtain all agreed upon discovery, if applicable, and discuss resolution of all disputed issues and claims.

2. Appointed attorneys shall represent the client until the case has been disposed or dismissed, appeals are exhausted, or the appointed individual is relieved of duties by the trial Court or replaced by order of the Court.

3. All appointed attorneys must have a working telephone or fax during normal business hours. All attorneys must have an email address and the capability of receiving produced discovery and disclosures in an electronic format.

4. If an appointed attorney does not have a fax or telephone number, then the attorney must employ a receptionist, have an answering service or an answering machine that receives recorded messages, or provide some other appropriate means on which a message can be left with the attorney.

5. All appointed attorneys shall be punctual and thoroughly prepared for all scheduled Court hearings, appearances and trials

Rule 19. Compensation Set by Court.

In cases where the Court is required to provide for the compensation of an appointed attorney *ad litem*, guardian *ad litem* or *amicus* attorney, attorneys shall be compensated at a rate set by the Court.

Rule 20. Attorney Fee Vouchers Requirements.

1. Not later than thirty (30) days after the case is disposed by the Court or all appeals are exhausted, the appointed attorney shall prepare and submit to the Court a voucher for the payment of fees and expenses on a form provided by the Court.

2. The voucher shall include all services provided to a single client regardless of the number of cases disposed. The voucher shall contain a detailed, itemized statement as to time expended, date and service rendered.

3. In cases in which final disposition may be prolonged or which require a significant amount of the *ad litem*'s time, the Court may consider periodic requests for payment submitted in accordance with the provisions of these rules.

Rule 21. Court Approval of Attorney Fee Vouchers.

- a. The Court shall determine the reasonableness of the amount requested based upon the time and labor required, the complexity of the case, and the experience and ability of the appointed counsel.
- b. If the Court disapproves the requested amount, upon the request of the attorney, the Court shall make written explanation for such findings.
- c. The Court will not award attorney fees for motions prepared and filed, or expenses incurred, that are not necessary for the proper disposition of the case.

Rule 22. Procedure for Objections to Court's Award of Appointed Attorney Fees.

- a. In the event that the Court disallows part or all of any fees or expenses submitted, the appointed attorney may file written objections to the Court's action and request a hearing to show the Court reasons that justify the amount requested on or before the expiration of thirty (30) days from the day that the trial Court disallowed the fee or expense.
- b. Appointed Attorneys must timely file a request for a hearing under this Rule.
- c. If the appointed attorney fails to timely request a hearing, the appointed attorney shall be deemed to have waived any objections to the Court's award of attorney fees or expenses.

Rule 23. Courtroom Decorum.

1. All persons in the Courtroom shall be attentive to the proceedings and cause no distraction.
2. The following is hereby prohibited in the Courtroom unless authorized by the Court:
 - a. Conferences or conversations to which the Court is not privy while Court is in session.
 - b. Sitting on railings, tables, desks, chair arms, propping feet on furniture, or fixtures, or leaning on the Court's bench.
 - c. Sleeping, reclining, or slouching in Courtroom seats.
 - d. Possession or consumption of beverages, food, chewing gum, and candy.
 - e. Use of tobacco products.
 - f. Use of communication devices, recording devices, etc. ALL SUCH DEVICES MUST BE TURNED OFF UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY THE COURT. Exception: An attorney may use a computer or phone as long as the computer is being used in the preparation or presentation of a cause that is presently being heard by the Court and/or the phone is on silent or vibrate mode and is being used for business purposes.

g. Wearing attire or accouterments that contain any commercial or campaign advertising that may create a bias or prejudice for or against a party or participant in a proceeding before the Court, or that may disrupt the orderly proceedings of the Courtroom.

h. Gestures, facial expressions, sounds, signs, or other action indicating approval or disapproval of any proceedings should be avoided.

i. Reading newspaper, magazines, books, etc.

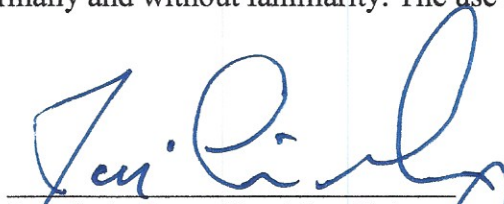
3. All persons in the Courtroom shall be attired in a manner reflecting the dignity of the Court. All attorneys shall be dressed in appropriate business attire (blue jeans, running shoes, etc. are not business attire). All male attorneys must wear either a suit or a blazer and slacks with a tie. All female attorneys must wear a dress, full length pants or skirt with blouse or other appropriate professional attire. All parties, witnesses and spectators shall be dressed appropriately. Shorts, beachwear, flip flops, and other similar recreational clothing are strictly prohibited.

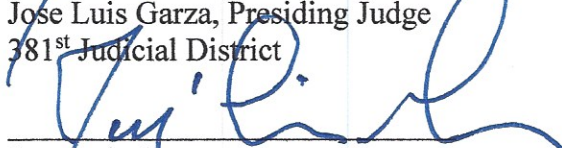
4. Attorneys shall address each other formally and without familiarity. The use of first names shall be avoided.

APPROVED:

Date: MAY 3 1 2018

Date: MAY 3 1 2018


Jose Luis Garza, Presiding Judge
381st Judicial District


Jose Luis Garza
Acting and Presiding by Assignment
229th Judicial District Judge