

240TH DISTRICT COURT

VIRTUAL HEARING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The 240th Judicial District Court of Fort Bend County, Texas is now conducting virtual hearings through the WebEx application. **Be advised that virtual hearings are only being conducted by the Associate Judge. All hearings in front of the Presiding Judge will be in person.** The following policies and procedures apply to the 240th Judicial District Court and are effective immediately until further notice from the Court.

The 240th Judicial District Court will conduct virtual hearings by using the WebEx platform approved by our County IT department. To participate in the WebEx hearing, you must have an electronic device with an internet connection. You must use a smart phone, iPad/tablet, or desktop/laptop computer with a built-in webcam/microphone. It shall be the responsibility of counsel and self-represented parties to download the WebEx app prior to a proceeding and to ensure that all hearings' participants have the ability to participate. In accordance with the Open Courts Provision of the Texas Constitution, ALL virtual hearings are livestreamed to the Court's webpage at: www.fortbendcountytexas.gov

STEPS TO OBTAIN A HEARING:

Request a hearing date and time by contacting the Court Coordinator, Elizabeth Adelekan, at 240AJ@fortbendcountytexas.gov. You MUST indicate in your hearing request the following:

1. The type of hearing requested;
2. The anticipated length of the entire hearing
3. Whether an interpreter is necessary and the required language

PROCEDURES FOR THE WEBEX HEARING:

- The scheduling party is responsible for noticing all parties. **The notice must include the WebEx meeting link, meeting number, and password.**
- The scheduling party is responsible for canceling the setting with the Court if a hearing is no longer necessary and shall notify all other parties of cancellation.
- **All of the usual in-person courtroom decorum, demeanor, and dress code rules shall apply.**
- Participants in the WebEx hearing should **minimize** outside noise and distractions.
- When filing a motion or petition, exhibits shall be attached to the lead document and be properly labeled.
- Exhibits for an evidentiary hearing must be e-filed at least 24 hours before the hearing date. An exhibit list and witness list must also be e-filed.
- Exhibits may be filed combined, but each exhibit must be easily identifiable and clearly labeled.
- All sensitive data must be removed or redacted from exhibits before filing.

- Parties/Counsel should attempt to reach stipulations regarding exhibit admissibility before the hearing. **FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE PROCEDURE MAY RESULT IN EXHIBIT EXCLUSION.**
- Parties are responsible for providing exhibits to opposing counsel/parties prior to the hearing.
- During the hearing, the Court will not be responsible for displaying exhibits through the WebEx app. The attorneys will be responsible to ensure their exhibits are capable of being displayed via the 'Share Screen' feature of the WebEx app and will be expected to do so without delaying the hearing.
- Parties are responsible for the logistics of their remote appearance. Technical difficulties that are not timely resolved may result in a hearing being passed.
- **IT IS ORDERED THAT RECORDING OF REMOTE WEBEX PROCEEDINGS IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN.** Attorneys, self-represented parties, witnesses, and attendees participating in remote hearings, or members of the public viewing a livestream are prohibited from recording, capturing, saving, broadcasting, televising, or photographing the proceeding in any manner. **FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THIS ORDER MAY RESULT IN CONTEMPT OF COURT PROCEEDINGS.**
- To request an official record, please contact the Court Reporter at **Marisol.RamosDC240@fortbendcountytexas.gov.**
- All hearings conducted through the WebEx platform are subject to additional instructions as deemed appropriate by the Court during the time of hearing.