

District and County Courts at Law

Rockwall County, Texas

Rules of Judicial Administration

In accordance with Rule 10(b) of the Rules of Judicial Administration related to Multi-Court Counties, and whereas, Rockwall County is served by two District Courts (382nd and 439th) and two County Courts at Law (No. 1 and No. 2), the following is intended to comply with the requirements of Rule 10(c) and to set forth the local rules related to: (1) The fair distribution of caseloads among the judges; (2) Responsibility for caseloads during emergencies; (3) Plans for administration of caseloads during a judge's vacation, sick leave, or attendance at educational programs or other similar matters; and (4) Requirements of Section 74.093(b) of the Government Code.

I. Distribution of Caseloads.

- (1) The 382nd and 439th District Courts administer all Felony indictments on an equal basis.
- (2) County Court at Law No. 1 and No. 2 administer all misdemeanor criminal cases on an equal basis.
- (3) Under Section 25.2012 of the Texas Government Code, the County Courts at Law share concurrent jurisdiction with the District Courts except for (1) cases involving capital murder; (2) suits on behalf of the State to recover penalties or escheated property; (3) misdemeanors involving official misconduct; (4) contested elections. The statute also designates the Local Administrative Judge to assign the categories of cases with concurrent jurisdiction to be administered by the County Courts at Law. After consultation and agreement between the judges, said designation is implemented pursuant to a local Administrative Order.
- (4) The two District Courts administer all civil cases filed as Level II and above, with amounts in controversy of \$50,000 or more, on an equal basis pursuant to local Administrative Order and in accordance with their general jurisdiction.
- (5) County Court at Law No. 1 and No. 2 equally administer all Level 1 civil cases with amounts in controversy of \$50,000 or less pursuant to local Administrative Order and in accordance with their general jurisdiction.
- (6) Also pursuant to local Administrative Order in an effort to equally and fairly distribute caseloads, the two District Courts and County Court at Law No. 1 equally administer all matters filed pursuant to the Texas Family Code, except for Juvenile matters which are administered through County Court at Law No. 2. County Court at Law No. 1 and the District Courts also act as alternate Juvenile Judges.
- (7) Also pursuant to Local Administrative Order, as referenced above, and in accordance with their jurisdiction, the County Court at Law No. 1 administers all Probate matters and the County Court at Law No. 2 administers all mental health cases; County Court at Law No. 1 and No. 2 also equally administer all Property Code Tax cases.
- (8) Administrative Orders referenced above are attached. Also attached is the Rockwall County Standing Order for active Family Law cases, related to children, property, and conduct of parties.

Rockwall Courts follow the Rules of Civil Procedure and the Rules of Criminal Procedure, and have adopted no additional specific local rules related thereto.

II. Responsibility for Caseloads During Emergencies

Because the District Courts and County Courts at Law have concurrent jurisdiction in matters designated by statute through Section 25.2012 of the Texas Government Code, they are able to exchange benches and sit for each other or transfer cases, as specified in Section 25.2012, in the event of the absence of a judge or as a result of a medical emergency.

During the recent COVID restrictions, the Rockwall County IT Department issued computers to Judges and staff and developed and supported technological capabilities for communication and continued service from locations other than the courthouse. Rockwall County followed Orders issued by the Texas Supreme Court during COVID and developed plans and policies pursuant thereto, to ensure continued operations of our courts including the use of Zoom and other accommodations. These plans were previously submitted and approved by the Regional Administrative Judge and the Office of Court Administration, and can be utilized again during emergencies, if necessary.

III. Vacations, Sick Leave, Educational Programs, etc...

During the absence of any Judge related to a vacation, sick leave, education seminars, or other reasons, we are able to either cover dockets sitting for each other as stated above in Section II, or request the Regional Judge to provide a visiting judge.

IV. Requirements of Section 74.093(b) – Texas Government Code; Miscellaneous

The requirements listed under Section 74.093(b) have been addressed in this plan and through implementation of Administrative Orders, copies of which are attached.

Plans related to the Fair Defense Act and Appointment of Counsel for Indigent Defendants are accessible online with the Indigent Defense Task Force as required by law.

Approved and Ordered this 22nd day of December 2022;

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
BRETT HALL**

Brett Hall, District Judge
382nd Judicial District Court

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
J. BRIAN WILLIAMS**

J. Brian Williams, Judge
County Court at Law No. 1

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
DAVID E. RAKOW**

David E. Rakow, District Judge
439th Judicial District Court

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
STEPHANI WOODWARD**

Stephani Woodward, Judge
County Court at Law No 2