

410TH DISTRICT COURT STANDING ORDER
REGARDING PRE-TRIAL HEARINGS AMID COVID-19 VIRUS CONCERNS

(Amended 3/12/20 at 8:25 p.m. as to paragraph 7 only)

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 virus a pandemic;

WHEREAS, both federal and Texas health authorities have recommended precautionary measures to defend against the spread of COVID-19.

WHEREAS, the 410th District Court conducts pre-trial conferences every Friday of every month, typically resulting in a full courtroom of people including the attendance of attorneys, parties, and other interested persons.

WHEREAS, in the interest of protecting the foregoing individuals, as well as court staff, bailiffs, district clerks, the general public, and the families of all of the above.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is HEREBY ORDERED, this 12th day of March, 2020, that the following precautionary measures are implemented until further order of the Court:

1. The Court will continue its ongoing practice of reviewing each pre-trial docket in the days immediately preceding each of said dockets, and proactively attempting to contact the attorneys and pro se parties to minimize the necessity of their physical appearance at pre-trial, including setting uncontested matters (prove-ups/defaults) on their current trial date and time, without the need to appear at pre-trial.
2. The attorneys and pro se parties are **HEREBY ORDERED** to contact the Court (via the Court Administrator's or Court Coordinator's email addresses which appear on the Court's website), at least 48 hours prior to a scheduled pre-trial conference, or as soon as applicable, if an Agreed Order (signed by all necessary parties) is filed in the cause, and request to remain on the original trial date and time for prove up/entry of same, without the need to appear in person at the pre-trial hearing.
3. The attorneys and pro se parties are **HEREBY ORDERED** to file any Motion for Continuance that he/she wishes to be considered in relation to the scheduled trial date, at least 72 hours prior to the start of the pre-trial hearing, and to notify the Court (via telephone call or via email to the Court Administrator's or Court Coordinator's email addresses), when said motion is filed. The Court will continue its ongoing practice of proactively reviewing unopposed motions for continuance in advance of pre-trial hearings, and attempting to contact the attorneys and pro se parties regarding the granting of same, to minimize the necessity of a physical or telephonic appearance at pre-trial.
4. The attorneys are **HEREBY ORDERED** to utilize "Court Call" at any and all pre-trial conferences, whenever possible, and to avoid a physical appearance in court at pre-trial. Pro Se parties are also strongly encouraged to participate at pre-trial by "Court Call." Attorneys who are unfamiliar with "Court Call" or how to register to use it, may contact the 410th Court Administrator, Leslie Broz, via email and she will send you the relevant information. It is **FURTHER ORDERED** that if the use of "Court Call" is not practical, only the attorney (without his/her client and without office staff) or the pro se party (without attendant family members or friends) shall physically attend the

pre-trial hearing. The number of people attending the pre-trial hearing shall be kept to an absolute minimum that is necessary to conduct court business.

5. It is **HEREBY ORDERED** that parties represented by counsel who are scheduled to appear either in person or via "Court Call" are excused from physically appearing at pre-trial, unless his/her presence is essential to a motion to be heard that day.
6. The attorneys and pro se parties are **HEREBY ORDERED** to notify all necessary parties in his/her case, as well as the 410th District Court via email to the Court Administrator or Court Coordinator, if such attorney or pro se party reasonably believes that a scheduled trial or hearing (that is the subject of the scheduled pre-trial hearing) may require or cause a court appearance of an individual who may be infected with COVID-19 (including testifying witnesses anticipated for trial). After notification of same, the Court, depending on the circumstances and the time allowed, will either schedule a telephone conference regarding same, or consider the issue by submission, and will instruct the attorneys and parties accordingly.
7. It is **HEREBY ORDERED** that each and every attorney and Pro Se litigant, in all family law and general civil cases, timely comply with the written Pre-Trial Checklist that has been recently implemented by the Court. Failure to timely comply with the written Pre-Trial Checklist may result in sanctions by the Court. If an opposing attorney or Pro Se party does not cooperate in the completion of the Pre-Trial Checklist, each attorney and Pro Se litigant is **HEREBY ORDERED** to timely and individually submit the completed Pre-Trial Checklist with only his/her signature. The Court will contact you to determine whether you still need to appear via Court Call. Initially implemented for Court efficiency and to accommodate attorneys and parties by minimizing Court appearances, this Pre-Trial Checklist is now an integral part of this Court's attempt to minimize the spread of COVID-19.
8. The above precautionary Orders are designed to minimize the physical appearance of attorneys and parties in court for Pre-Trial hearings, and should reduce the number of physically present persons in the courtroom at Pre-Trial hearings by 75% or more. This Court will continue to monitor the local threat of the COVID-19 virus and will amend this Standing Order as applicable to ensure the health and safety of the public.

Signed: March 12, 2020 at 8:25 p.m.

/s/ Jennifer Robin
JENNIFER ROBIN
Presiding Judge, 410TH DISTRICT COURT