

**IN THE 506TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
OF WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS**

March 13, 2020

Court Appearances Plan of Action
March 16 - 20

In light of the COVID-19 issues, the Court hereby ORDERS the following procedures to be implemented for all Court appearances during the week of March 16 through 20, in Waller County. All attorneys and court staff are to assist in implementing this plan and these Orders. Questions and comments are welcome through the Court's email addresses found on the website.

Attorneys from the State and Defense are expected to use individual initiative to expedite and implement this plan. Contact with the Court Coordinator should be via email. All courtesies and patience will be greatly appreciated.

ATTORNEYS: Contact your clients **BEFORE** Court and personally determine if they are exhibiting any of the symptoms of COVID-19 or the Flu. If they are, tell them to stay away. Contact the Court Coordinator and get a reset form, fill it out without client signature and return to the Coordinator via email, fax, hand-delivery or postal service.

1. **March 17th Arraignments:**

- a. Inmates will not be brought to the Courthouse until 10:00 a.m. in order to reduce exposure time.
- b. **Attorneys**, if you appear in Court for an arraignment, contact the Court Coordinator on your arrival, get a Scheduling Order which includes a waiver of arraignment, get it signed by your client and the ADA, and return it to the Coordinator. At that point you and your client are free to leave.
- c. **Contract attorneys** should remain available in the Courtroom during docket call to receive appointments on those defendants eligible for an appointed attorney. On appointment, use standard procedures.
- d. **Attorneys**, if you receive this Order prior to Court, you may contact the Coordinator *via email* and request a Scheduling Order which includes a waiver of arraignment. Fill it out, sign it, and return it to the Coordinator no later than 5:00 p.m., March 16, 2020, via email, fax, or hand-delivery.

2. **March 17th and 19th Afternoon Dockets:**

- a. **Motions & Status Settings:** Attorneys, if your client is set for either a Status or Motions setting, contact the Coordinator immediately (**via email**). Your case will be reset to the May ancillary docket on the date that applies to your case. You will receive a Scheduling Order via email that you are to sign and return to the Coordinator no later than 5:00 p.m. March 19th. If your client is available to sign, please have them sign. If the client cannot sign or is not available, indicate that on the

form prior to returning it to the Coordinator. If you represent multiple clients you may use a single email but provide a separate section for each defendant including full cause number, full name as on the indictment, and any information you need to provide on that defendant.

- b. **Pretrial Settings:** Trial readiness announcements will be made via email or fax, as *Ready* or *Not Ready*. If you announce *Not Ready*, your case will be assigned a new pretrial date in May. If you announce *Ready*, your case will remain on or be assigned to a trial date in the usual manner.

3. **March 19th Probation Docket:**

The March 19th Probation Docket will be handled in the usual manner.

4. **Bond Hearings & Reductions:**

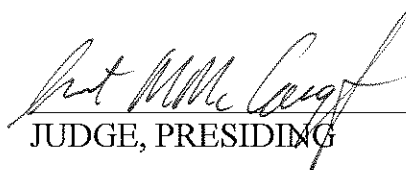
- a. **FIRST**, contact the State's attorney assigned to the case and attempt to work out an agreement. The Court will honor agreements reached between the State and the Defense.
- b. If no agreement is reached, bond matters will be handled at the in-person arraignment or other scheduled setting.

5. **Pleas from Plea Bargains and Other Sentencing:**

- a. If the State and Defense have come to terms on a plea bargain, make every effort to have the paperwork fully completed and in the hands of the defense attorney prior to court in order to minimize exposure time. Defense attorneys are to expeditiously get the papers reviewed and to the Clerk in order to minimize exposure time.
- b. Plea bargains worked out on docket days will be handled in due course as usual. However, make every effort to efficiently get the papers reviewed, signed, and to the Clerk in order to minimize exposure time.

This situation is very fluid and information is being updated literally by the hour. Expect changes and be ready to respond as necessary. These Orders are not intended to reduce the duties of attorneys and defendants to meet their respective obligations. However, this situation does require us to dispose of cases as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The Court has every confidence that all attorneys, both the State and Defense, as officers of the Court, will make every effort to perform their duties in the professional manner exhibited in the past.



JUDGE, PRESIDING

On a personal note, I understand that all of us make sacrifices every day for our clients, our profession, and our clients. During these troubling times, I encourage everyone, attorneys, peace officers, court staff, and office staff, to please take care of yourself. Our great nation has endured many trials; and we will endure this one as well and come out of it better and stronger than before.

