

207th, 433rd and 466th District Court Zoom Hearing Orders and Procedures in Civil Cases Comal County

The 207th, 433rd and 466th Judicial District Courts will continue to utilize Zoom for civil hearings on a limited basis. The procedures set forth shall be strictly adhered to by the parties and are in addition to the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, the Texas Rules of Evidence, Comal County Local Rules and the Courts' instructions during hearings. Please review the proceeding procedures and if you have questions, please contact the Comal County District Court's Office of Court Administration at 1-830-221-1270. Violations of this order may result in your case being removed from the docket, your evidence not being admitted, or may be punishable by contempt or other order of the Courts.

Procedures

1. Day and Hours: 466th District Court- Zoom hearings for civil cases will be held on Mondays only. The Monday docket will be divided into times beginning at 9am. Proceeding dockets will begin at 10am and at 1:30 pm. The court may order a zoom hearing outside the standard Monday hearings.

Day and Hours: 207th and 433rd District Court Zoom hearings for civil cases will be held at the date and time prescribed by the court or on a Notice of Hearing as agreed to by the parties.

2. Length of hearing- The requested hearing shall be less than one hour total. If the estimated time is more than one hour the hearing will be reset and placed upon an in-person docket.
3. Prior to scheduling a hearing via Zoom, all counsel or pro se litigants shall confer with opposing counsel or party as appropriate to determine if there are any agreements as to the issues in controversy or to narrow the issues to be presented to the Court, absent a family violence or safety concern. Also prior to scheduling a hearing, all counsel or pro se litigants shall confer with opposing counsel or party to identify agreed upon dates and times for any proposed hearing.
4. Scheduling a Hearing- All parties requesting a Zoom hearing must contact the Court Administration Office to schedule a date and time. Once a date and time for a hearing is identified by the parties in conjunction with the Court Coordinator, a Motion to Set or Notice of Hearing shall be sent to the Court Coordinator with the identified date and time. If a date and time cannot be agreed upon, the Court Coordinator will set forth the date and time for the hearing.

5. All Motions to Set or Notices of Hearing for Zoom hearings shall note in the Motion/Notice that the hearing is scheduled for a Zoom hearing and shall provide the Court's Zoom link and Meeting ID.
6. Hearing Date- On the day of a Zoom hearing, counsel or pro se parties shall log-in using the appropriate link provided by the Court Coordinator. All parties, including pro se parties, should arrive in the virtual courtroom 10 minutes before the scheduled time and remain in the waiting room until the Court calls your case. Each attendee is responsible for ensuring they know how to utilize Zoom properly with working audio and video and that they have reliable internet connection.
7. Zoom Hearing Link and Meeting ID-
 - a. 207th District Court:
Please contact District court at 830-221-1270 for Zoom information.
 - b. 433rd. District Court
<https://txcourts.zoom.us/j/9757519081>
Please contact District court at 830-221-1270 for Zoom information.
 - c. 466th District Court:
<https://txcourts.zoom.us/j/8846134243>
Please contact District court at 830-221-1270 for Zoom information.
8. Exhibits/Exavault- Exavault will be used for all exhibits for Zoom hearings in the 466th district court. Absent good cause to the contrary, all exhibits, including exhibits use for impeachment or rebuttal, should be uploaded the day **before** your scheduled hearing-no sooner and no later. Any uploads prior to this time frame will be deleted to conserve space and assist in keeping information organized. The parties are to make sure any exhibits uploaded are also shared with/produced to the opposing party to ensure the hearing moves as smoothly as possible.
 - a. Instructions for uploading documents to Exavault can be found on the courts website here: <https://www.co.comal.tx.us/DCT.htm>
9. Witnesses Appearing Via Zoom-The appearance of witnesses via Zoom will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, on motion of any party.

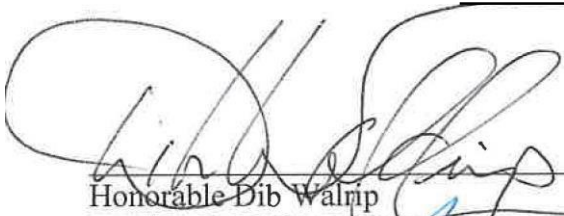
Rules

1. Zoom proceedings are actual court proceedings conducted in a virtual courtroom.


2. Hearings will be live streamed into a courtroom at the Comal County Courthouse Annex for public viewing. Participants shall treat Zoom hearings with the same respect as in-person court proceedings.
3. Virtual courtroom hearings shall observe the decorum, demeanor, and dress code rules as in-person hearings.
4. Attorneys shall be responsible for ensuring their clients appear on Zoom dressed appropriately in a quiet, professional space (i.e. not lying in bed, couch, or partially dressed).
5. Attorneys and their clients must ensure that their FULL NAME displays on their Zoom screen as it appears on the docket; not a device model, nickname or any other description. If an attorney is appearing for another attorney, the attorney should note in the comments or in the Zoom display the name of the attorney for whom they are appearing.
6. Participants in Zoom hearings shall minimize outside noise and distractions.
7. No participant shall drive while appearing on Zoom.
8. Chatting with, text messaging, and any other form of communication with witnesses while they are testifying, other than the party examining the witness, is strictly prohibited.
9. All participants must be prepared to report to an in-person hearing at the earliest possible date, should the court order the parties and their attorneys to appear at an in-person hearing.
10. Any attorney or client failing to follow the orders related to Zoom hearings will be excluded from the hearing and may be ordered to appear at the courthouse in person to handle the matter on the same day as the hearing or at a date in the future.
11. The Court may limit the number of attendees in a Zoom court hearing, particularly from the same law office, if that attendance interferes with the Court's Zoom link and slows down the electronic processing of the hearing.
12. Until Court begins, parties and their counsel will be in the Court's Waiting Room. Parties, their counsel and witnesses may be in the Waiting Room until their case is called; there are often multiple cases on a docket and it may take some time before the case is called.
13. All witness subpoenas should direct the witness to appear in the virtual courtroom and must include the Zoom link and Meeting ID.

14. The Zoom hearing will not be recorded. As with any hearing or trial, transcript requests must be directed to the Official Court Reporter for the District Court in which the hearing takes place.
15. The Court's Standing Order Prohibiting Recordings, including Zoom hearings, remains in effect. Attorneys, self-represented parties, witnesses, and attendees participating in remote hearings, or members of the public viewing a live stream, are prohibited from recording, capturing, saving, broadcasting, televising, or photographing the proceeding in any manner, including, but not limited to, screen shots, still pictures, audio recordings or video recordings. Failure to abide by this order may result in contempt of court proceedings.

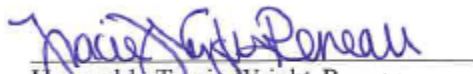
IT IS SO ORDERED on this 11th day of July, 2023.



Honorable D. Walip
433rd Judicial District Court



Honorable Stephanie Bascon
466th Judicial District Court



Honorable Tracie Wright-Reneau
207th Judicial District Court