



Judge Cynthia Marie Chapa

288th District Court
Bexar County Courthouse
San Antonio, TX 78205

(210) 335-2663

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March 13, 2020

Amid the ongoing concerns and escalation of COVID-19, and in the interest of the safety and welfare of the public, attorneys, clients, and courthouse staff, the Bexar County Civil District Courts have made the following decisions regarding the Civil Presiding Court docket.

Limitation of the Civil Presiding and Monitoring Court Dockets

Beginning Tuesday, March 17, 2020 and continuing through Tuesday, March 30, 2020, the Presiding Court docket will be limited to only "essential matters," as those are defined below, and the Civil Presiding Courts will continue to hear such matters during this time period.

For cases set for hearing on Monday, March 16, 2020, all parties and attorneys are encouraged to reach agreements to reset any cases not defined as an "essential matter."

Beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, and continuing through Tuesday, March 30, 2020, the Monitoring Court docket will be limited to 25 matters, with the Monitoring Judge giving preference to matters defined as an "essential matter."

Self-represented Litigant Docket. All self-represented litigant dockets have been suspended until March 30, 2020. If you are a self-represented litigant and had a case set through the Staff Attorney's office during the period March 16, 2020 through March 30, 2020, you will receive your reset notice in the mail.

Furthermore, if a party or an attorney is exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms, including fever, coughing, or sneezing, or if one believes he or she may have been exposed to COVID-19, the Court encourages those involved arrange for affected matter(s) to be rescheduled. Should the parties be unable to reach agreements, the Presiding Judge and the District Judge to whom the matter is assigned retain and will exercise their inherent discretion to reschedule hearings as needed to ensure the threat of COVID-19 is minimized.

"Essential Matter" Defined

The Bexar County Civil District Courts have defined a case that falls under the following criteria as an "essential matter":

- Suits brought under Title 4 of the Texas Family Code, specifically applications for protective orders involving family violence;

- Suits brought under Chapters 261 and 262 under Title 5 of the Texas Family Code, specifically removal hearings in suits brought by governmental entities for the protection of a child/children;
- Suits brought under Chapter 33 of the Texas Family Code, specifically judicial bypass cases;
- Suits brought under Chapter 160 of the Texas Family Code, specifically gestational surrogacy cases;
- Suits brought under Chapter 157, Subchapter H under the Texas Family Code, specifically writs of habeas corpus, writs of attachment for children, and enforcement actions where a Respondent is incarcerated;
- Suits or hearings involving jurisdictional deadlines that cannot be waived or continued;
- Criminal magistrate proceedings, and
- Requests for Temporary Restraining Orders and Temporary Injunctions.

The Civil District Judges retain the inherent discretion to add or remove a hearing from the Presiding Court docket.

Dissemination of Up-To-Date Information

Because this situation remains fluid and evolving, the Bexar County Civil District Courts will distribute any new and updated information to the public through the following website:

<https://www.bexar.org/1703/Civil-District-Courts>

We encourage the public to stay current and up to date with recommendations and required measures from local, state, and national authorities.

Please continue to exercise diligence in protecting yourselves, your family members and loved ones, and the public at large by taking precautionary measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19, including frequent hand-washing using soap and water, using hand-sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed or unsanitized hands, and avoiding close contact with others.

On behalf of the Bexar County Civil District Courts, I would like to thank the public in advance for its understanding. We remain committed to serving our citizens in the manner that ensures the public safety and welfare are protected.

Sincerely,



CYNTHIA MARIE CHAPA
Presiding Civil District Court Judge