



Policies & Procedures

Harris County Civil County Civil Court at Law No. One (1)

[Harris Civil Courts at Law](#) | [Civil Court at Law No. 1](#)

Contacting the Court

For all matters relating to hearings, motions, filings, requests for hearings, and case status, contact the Clerks:

Donna Brodell
713-274-1345

Jesse Salas
713-274-1345

To determine whether the Court has ruled on a motion, please check the case record on the County Clerk's website via the [document search portal](#) or contact the Court staff.

For all matters relating to trials, contact the Trial Coordinator:

Melissa Hammond
832-927-1711
melissa_hammond@ccl.hctx.net

For all matters relating to transcripts, contact the Court Reporter:

Lettie Witter
832-927-1713
lettie_witter@ccl.hctx.net

For Information regarding audio/visual and courtroom security and decorum, contact the Bailiff:

Deputy Willie Hughes
832-927-1712

Motion Dockets

Oral Hearing Dockets

- The Court conducts oral hearings on **Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.** (You must confirm availability with the clerks)
- Parties must file a notice of hearing with a certificate of service and serve all parties.
- Five (5) business days' notice is required for oral hearings.
- A motion must have a certificate of service, be accompanied by a proposed order, and be filed with or prior to the notice of hearing.
- Records are taken by request only. Fill out the [Court Reporter's Request for Record](#) prior to the hearing.
- Contact the Court Clerk to pass a hearing. *Hearings may only be passed by the party who set them.*
- The Court allows 15 minutes for late calls.
- Hearings expected to last longer than 45 minutes may require a special setting, please call and inform the clerk if this applies to your hearing.

Use the following information for hearings conducted remotely:

Web address: <https://hccocm.zoom.us/my/hccivil01> | Meeting ID: **5927 94 4638** | Phone Access: **(346) 248-7799**

Motions that Require an Oral Hearing

- **Minor Settlements** If your case is set for Entry and the minor settlement has not been scheduled, please schedule prior to the Entry date, or contact the Trial Coordinator.
- **Homeowners' Association Motion for Default Judgment** seeking judicial foreclosure or Motion for Default Judgment with unliquidated damages.
- **Applications for Temporary Restraining Orders (TRO)** may be set by contacting the Clerk for the next available setting. Written notice must be filed with the Court and served to the opposing party by phone, fax, and/or in writing. Proof of attempts to notify opposing counsel must be provided to the Court.
- **Motion for Summary Judgment** with one or more self-represented (pro se).
- Any motion on an **appeal** from the **Justice of the Peace Court**.

Submission Dockets

- The Court conducts submission hearings ***Tuesdays and Fridays at 9:30 a.m.*** (You must confirm availability with the clerks).
- Parties must file a notice of submission with a certificate of service, and serve all parties.
- Parties must provide ten (10) days' notice for submission hearings, and serve on all self-represented parties by hand delivery or certified mail and regular mail.
- A motion must be accompanied by a proposed order and filed prior to or with a notice of submission .
- Contact the Court Clerk to pass a submission hearing. *Hearings may only be passed by the party setting them.*

Off-Docket Motions

The following do not require a setting unless otherwise instructed by the Court.

Agreed Motions The motion must have the signatures of all parties or counsel and be filed as "agreed" or "joint", with a Certificate of Conference and a Certificate of Service attached.

Occupational Licenses The petitioner must have their SR-22, proof of insurance, and a certified copy of their driving record before the Judge will review the petition. Please refer to the Texas Department of Public Safety for information on obtaining a certified copy of a driving record. [TXDPS How to Order a Driver Record](#)

Motion for Default Judgment not involving a Homeowners' Association or with unliquidated damages will be ruled on without the need of a setting. The return of service must be on file 10 days before the motion, and the following must be included in the motion:

- Affidavit proving up damages (include last statement or invoice)
- Affidavit of attorney's fees including some estimate of time or description of actions taken on the case.
 - Percentage of the contract required on contingencies
- Certificate of last known address
- Non-Military Affidavit with a copy of the results from <https://scra.dmdc.osd.mil/scra/#/home> or, <https://mla.dmdc.osd.mil/mla/#/home>
 - The search must be completed within 30 days of filing the motion.
- Certificate of Service

If any of the foregoing is missing or incorrect, the Court may give 30 days to allow submission of the proper documents. If the proper documents are not received, the case will be subject to Dismissal for Want of Prosecution. It is the responsibility of the movant to follow up on their motions for default to check the status

Motion for Substituted Service must be accompanied by an affidavit that includes the following:

- Documentation or factual affidavit that verifies the Defendant actually resides or is employed at the subject address (e.g. Appraisal District Records, Vehicle Registration, factual affidavit)
- At least 4 attempts to serve
- Each attempt at service with date and time
 - Last attempt at service must be within 45 days of the filing of the motion
 - Attempts must be at varied times of the day
- The identity of any persons present at the attempted service and any statements that were made, and/or;
- The information of cars in the driveway or other indicators the defendant resides or works at the address

Follow procedures in Tex. Bus. Org. Code §5.251 for Corporate Agents that cannot be found at the registered office of the entity with reasonable diligence.

Motion to Appear Pro Hac Vice must comply with Tex. Gov't. Code §82.0361

Additional Off-Docket Motions

Motion to Appoint Guardian Ad Litem	Plaintiff's Non-Suit
Motion to Substitute Counsel of Record	Motion to Appoint Attorney Ad Litem
Motion to Show Cause	Agreed Judgment
Tax Warrants	Application to Close Receivership
Installment Agreement	Application for Sequestration - <i>with affidavit and military web search</i>

Additional Due Process and Procedural Requirements

Discovery Disputes

Parties must make several attempts on separate days to conference with opposing parties relating to discovery disputes and include a certificate of conference in their motion. All certificates of conference must state whether counsel have conferred regarding the substance of the relief requested and if the relief is opposed, agreed or agreed in part, along with a statement of what relief was agreed to between the parties. It must also state the number of attempts made to contact the opposing party, the method of attempts, and the results obtained. Insufficient attempts or failure to provide a substantive certificate may result in denial of the motion to compel or the hearing being passed by the Court.

Pre-Judgment Remedies

Pleadings requesting pre-judgment remedies (e.g., garnishment, attachment, sequestration) must be accompanied by verified facts and non-military affidavits in compliance with the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)

Proposed orders should set out the amount of the bond calculated to protect the interests of the parties (both creditor and debtor), which should typically be the market value of any levied property. The bond amount for the debtor should merely be the amount owed if less than the market value.

Trial Dockets

Non-Jury Trials

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Non-Jury trials are conducted ***Mondays beginning at 9:30 a.m.*** unless preferentially set. There are no docket positions for non-jury trials. Parties should be prepared to proceed with trial on the date set and should furnish proposed orders to the Court. Trials estimated to last longer than 30 minutes will need to contact the Trial Coordinator as the case may be set preferentially later in the day or given a special setting upon agreement or necessity. Records are taken by request only, fill out the [Court Reporter's Request for Record](#) prior to trial. Plaintiff or their counsel must inform by the Coordinator by email, or filing if the case settles prior to trial.

Pursuant to Tex. R. Civ. Proc. §509.8(e) and 510.10(c) Justice Court Appeals of **Repair and Remedy and Eviction** cases take precedence or are entitled to precedence in appeals in the County Civil Courts at law and may be set for trial at any time after the eighth day following the filing of the transcript in the county court. Plaintiff should send trial setting notices to Defendant via certified mail, regular mail, and any electronic delivery address on file with the Court, with proof provided at trial.

Courtroom Expectations

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- Check-in with Court Staff at least 10 minutes prior to docket start time.
- Notify Court staff if you need to step out and where, so that you may be located if necessary.
- Follow proper Court decorum.

Jury Trials

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All jury trials are preferentially set, dates are assigned at the **Status docket**, held ***every other Friday at 9:30 a.m.*** Cases are assigned based on their age, and readiness to proceed. Plaintiff or their counsel must inform by the Coordinator by email, or filing if the case settles prior to trial.

Prior to trial, the court will send notice that the parties will be required to attend a Pre-Trial Conference on the day immediately preceding the trial date unless otherwise specified. Before the pre-trial conference, each party must exchange their witness list, pre-numbered exhibits, motion in limine, edited excerpts of deposition testimony, proposed jury charge, questions, and instructions, and copies of anticipated demonstrative exhibits with all parties, and confer regarding the following:

- Agreed pre-admitted exhibits,
- Witness lists,
- Agreed factual stipulations
- Agreed motion in limine, and;
- Joint proposed charge.

Pretrial documents must be efiled, and courtesy copies delivered to the Clerk, by Wednesday prior to the pre-trial conference. The clerks are located at 201 Caroline, 5th Floor, Houston, Texas 77002, and their hours of operation are Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Exclusion of Expert Witness Testimony or Daubert Motions to exclude expert witness testimony should be filed well in advance of the trial. In a case requiring expert testimony as a matter of law, plaintiff should be given a reasonable opportunity to retain a qualified expert for trial.

Courtroom Expectations

- The Court will pull a panel of 18 jurors and 6 jurors will be selected.
- Prior to Voir Dire, the clerks will distribute one jury packet to each side and a seating chart. 20-30 will be allotted per side for voir dire.
- 10 minutes will be allowed for strikes, each side is entitled to three peremptory strikes. Any challenges for cause will be held at the bench on an individual basis.
- All proceedings will be on the record in a jury trial, with the exception of Voir Dire and Motions in Limine. Notify the Court Reporter in advance for the exceptions to be included on the record. [Court Reporter's Request for Record](#)
- Courtroom decorum should be explained to witnesses by counsel before entering the Courtroom.
- Post-verdict motions and opposed judgments must be set for a hearing on the oral hearing docket. All normal oral hearing procedures must be followed.

Continuance

Motions for Continuance should be filed as soon as the grounds for such a motion are reasonably apparent and filed at least two (2) weeks prior to the trial date.

First-time requests for a 30-day continuance that are uncontested, and service is obtained, or due diligence regarding the attempts to serve are stated, will be automatically granted. A certificate of service and a certificate of conference must accompany the motion.

Continuances after the first, and opposed continuances, will require a showing of good cause, a certificate of conference, and an oral hearing.

Vacation Letters

To assert vacation, attorneys must file their vacation letter with the District Clerk or County Clerk and file a Motion for Continuance with the vacation letter attached and served to all parties. Attorneys with multiple cases must file a separate motion for each case.

The Court will honor Motions for Continuance with vacation letters that are timely filed.

Settlements

Upon settlement of any case, Plaintiff's counsel or self-represented (pro se) plaintiffs should immediately notify the Trial Coordinator in writing (i.e., email – with a copy to all parties).

Cases that announce settlement will be placed on the Entry Docket, conducted Fridays at 9:30 a.m. (no appearance necessary) within approximately 30 days to allow parties to submit final documents. If more time is needed, notify the Trial Coordinator and file a motion for continuance.

Settlements involving minors must be set for an oral hearing. Please refer to the Motion Dockets section of these procedures for instructions regarding oral hearings. If a Guardian Ad Litem has not been appointed to represent the minor in the case, please file a Motion and Proposed Order or contact the Court.

Service of Process

All cases are subject to Dismissal for Want of Prosecution if service is not perfected, and no answer is filed within **180 days** of filing.

Courtroom Etiquette & Decorum

The same etiquette and decorum expected in a physical courtroom is expected in a virtual courtroom.

- Remove hats or caps, except religious hats or materials
- Attorneys shall observe the letter and spirit of all canons of ethics and advise their clients of decorum
- Pro-se parties are held to the same standard as attorneys
- Cell phones must be silent and out of sight
- No eating
- No tobacco or vaping product use
- No driving
- Dress appropriately for Court
- Be courteous and respectful to all participants.

Compliance with Gov. Code 82.037(a)(4) will be expected from all counsel and self-represented (pro se) parties: "Conduct oneself with integrity and civility in dealing and communicating with the Court and all parties."

Useful Links

Efiling Procedures and FAQs	https://www.cclerk.hctx.net/Civil.aspx#eFile
Forms	https://www.cclerk.hctx.net/Civil.aspx#CForms
Document Search and Ordering Copies	https://www.cclerk.hctx.net/applications/websearch/CourtSearch.aspx?CaseType=Civil
Court Calendar Search	https://www.cclerk.hctx.net/Applications/WebSearch/CourtSettingsTyler.aspx?CaseType=Civil
Self-Help Legal Resources	https://www.harriscountylibrary.org/self-help-information-resources
	https://www.sll.texas.gov/legal-help/
	https://www.texascourthelp.gov/
Harris County Holidays	https://www.harriscountytexas.gov/Residents/Information/Harris-County-Holidays