Travis County Criminal Courts at Law

Revised Plan for Resuming In-Person Jury Trials & Dockets
Effective February 28, 2022

The County Courts at Law (CCL) plan to resume in-person jury trials and limited in-person dockets effective February 28, 2022. Each Court may hold up to 2 in-person and one out of custody virtual docket day per week. Bond Review Docket (BRD) will continue to be held virtually Monday through Friday.

In efforts to balance the safety of the public and staff with the administration of justice, this schedule is dependent upon the COVID precaution stage as of February 15, 2022. Should the COVID stage be higher than stage 4 on February 15, this schedule is subject to revision according to recommended precautions and County governance.

Jury Trials

Beginning on February 28, 2022, the CCL's will resume a regular jury schedule (see attached 2022 CCL Docket Schedule). Priority will be given to in-custody defendants.

Masking will be required of all potential jurors, staff and the public entering the CJC. KN95 masks will be made available to jurors and defense attorneys, who are parties to the trial. Based on limited availability, County departments should provide their own KN95 masks to their employees.

Parties who are scheduled for an in-person jury proceeding must present any objections or motions related to proceedings (including mask objections) at least 10 working days prior to the trial setting or show good cause for an objection or motion filed thereafter. Any objections or motions related to proceeding with an in-person jury proceeding will be heard by the judge presiding over the case at least 7 working days prior to the in-person jury proceeding or as soon as practicable.

Voir dire may be scheduled at 1:30 pm in the afternoon on Monday, Tuesday and/or Wednesday, for 2 County Courts, as needed. Up to 40 jurors will be summoned for each Court. Each Court's staff is responsible for communicating requests and cancellations to the Jury Office.

Voir dire will be held in the gallery of the assigned court's courtroom, and selected jurors will be seated in the jury box. When a juror rises to speak, the Judge may allow the speaker to remove their mask. Each Court will determine whether they will continue to hold their virtual and in-person dockets during their jury week; however, jury trials will not be held during the Court's assigned BRD week.

Virtual Dockets

County Courts 3, 4, 6, 7 8, and 9 will continue to have one day of the week scheduled for out-of-custody defendants who are ready to plea that will be held via zoom. Courts may also use zoom to hold attorney only dockets.

BRD and CC4's Jail Docket will continue to be held virtually.

In-Person Dockets

The Courts are committed to prioritizing out of custody defendants appearing in person *only* when some action will be taken or the Court has determined it is necessary (e.g., admonishments); therefore, each Court will initially schedule up to 2 days per week for in-person dockets.

The Courts will assess whether additional in-person dockets are needed after a period of time. It should be noted this schedule is dependent on the local health authority and the Travis County Commissioners Court guidelines applicable at the time with regards to capacity, distancing, and other health directives.

General Information

None of the above guidelines will prohibit any individual Court from exercising its judicial discretion in determining the proceedings that may be legally and appropriately held remotely. The Court shall retain its ability to exercise this judicial discretion as stated and allowed by the Texas Supreme Court and Office of Court Administration orders. Any special circumstances or considerations that either party may have, should be presented to the Court at the time of setting for the Court's consideration.