

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

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IN THE PROBATE COURTS

OF

DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS

**ORDER TEMPORARILY MODIFYING COURT PROCEEDINGS**  
**IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 VIRUS**

ON THIS DAY, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, in the best interest of public safety, the Dallas County Probate Courts enter this order regarding certain temporary changes governing Court proceedings of the Probate Courts.

Pursuant to the disaster declarations of Governor Greg Abbott, County Judge Clay Jenkins and the orders of the Supreme Court of Texas and the Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas, the Courts find it necessary to implement temporary measures to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19, on a temporary basis.

The modified procedures are as follows:

Hearings:

1. Only essential and/or emergency hearings will be held from this date through April 1, 2020 in the Probate Courts. No jury trials will be held until further notice or unless expressly authorized by a Judge.
2. Essential hearings include applications for temporary guardianship, temporary administration, temporary injunctions, temporary restraining orders, emergency removals and mental health proceedings that are required by statute to occur within a certain period of time. Other essential hearings that may be conducted will be limited to will prove-ups on applications for letters testamentary and applications for muniment of title.
3. Will prove-ups and certain contested hearings not suitable for telephone conferences will be heard in person. Only the lawyers, named parties, and witnesses should enter the courtroom as directed by the Bailiff or Court staff.
4. If a hearing is cancelled by the Court, attorneys will be notified by Court staff. It will be the attorney's responsibility to notify clients and witnesses of the cancellation. Any cancellation will not continue any pending deadlines other than the hearing dates. Attorneys should contact the Court if they wish to modify such other deadlines. Attorneys should confirm all settings with the court staff by phone or email.

Communications with the Court

5. Outside of an emergency, all business with Court staff should be handled by telephone or email.

6. If an attorney wishes to utilize a conferencing service for communication, conference, or hearing with Court personnel, the attorney should obtain prior authorization from the Court. A request to utilize such a service may be submitted to the Court by email

#### Guardianships

7. If guardianship letters are set to expire in the next 30 days, the Court will sign a 30-day order of extension upon written request and review.
8. Until further notice, no Court investigator in-person visits will be made. Court investigators will instead make contact with individuals only by telephone or electronic means.

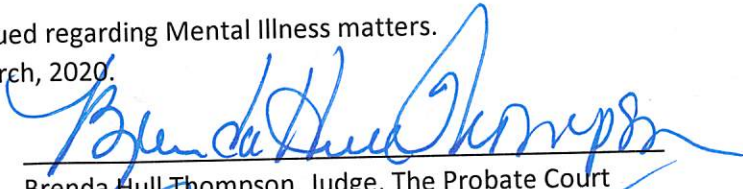
#### Court Precautions

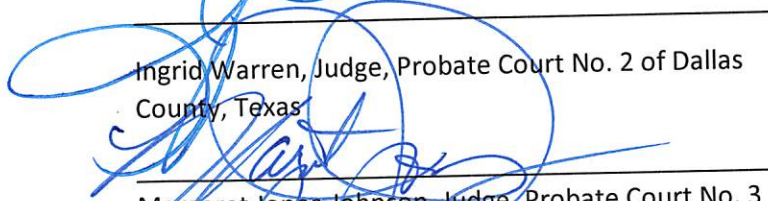
9. No person who is ill or not feeling well, has traveled within the last 14 days to any of the countries for which the CDC has issued a Level 3 or Level 2 Travel Health Notice, has had close contact with someone who has traveled to one of these countries within the last 14 days, has been asked to self-quarantine by any hospital or health agency, or has been diagnosed with or had close contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 14 days should come to a Court, Court chambers, or a hallway leading to a courtroom. If a person appears to be ill or if Court personnel receive indication that any individual present in the vicinity of a Court is not feeling well, such person will be asked to leave the premises.
10. Each individual appearing in the vicinity of the Courts shall endeavor to stay several feet away from any other individual and shall follow hand-washing and other procedures in advance of appearance to minimize the risk of spread of any COVID-19 virus.
11. If a person becomes ill or becomes aware of illness in someone else shortly after a Court appearance, the Court should be notified immediately.

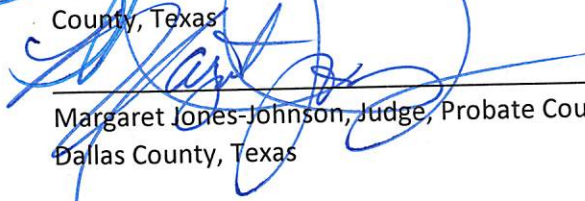
#### Notifications

12. A notification will be issued and posted on the Dallas County Clerk's website when normal operations resume.
13. A separate administrative order will be issued regarding Mental Illness matters.

SO ORDERED the 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020.

  
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Brenda Hull Thompson, Judge, The Probate Court  
of Dallas County, Texas

  
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Ingrid Warren, Judge, Probate Court No. 2 of Dallas  
County, Texas

  
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Margaret Jones-Johnson, Judge, Probate Court No. 3 of  
Dallas County, Texas