

**2020-2**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**                    §                    **IN THE PROBATE COURTS**

**2020-2**                                    §                                    **OF**

   §                                    **DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS**

**SECOND ORDER REGARDING CHANGES IN COURT PROCEEDINGS  
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 VIRUS**

**ON THIS DAY**, March 24, 2020, the Dallas County Probate Courts enter this order revising temporary changes in court proceedings in the Probate Courts for the protection of the public and the courts and to minimize exposure to COVID-19.

Pursuant to the disaster declarations and directives of Governor Greg Abbott and County Judge Clay Jenkins and pursuant to Misc. Docket No. 20-9042, In the Supreme Court of Texas and Misc. Docket 20-007, In the Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas, the Courts have determined that only emergency and essential hearings will be held from this date until further notice and the courts will only retain essential staff.

The modified procedures are as follows:

**Jury Trials**

1. All jury trials are cancelled thru May 8, 2020.

**Emergency and Essential Matters**

2. EMERGENCY matters pre-approved by a court will be set for hearing until further notice.
3. Emergency matters include applications for temporary guardianships, temporary administrations, temporary injunctions, temporary restraining orders, removal of elderly by Adult Protective Services, reports of sale when closing of the sale cannot be postponed, and mental health proceedings that are required by statute to occur within a certain time. Essential hearings that may be conducted will be limited to will prove-ups on applications for letters testamentary and/or administration and muniment of title.
4. If a hearing on an emergency or essential matter is allowed by the court, the attorney should contact the court before the hearing for the court's procedures for conducting the hearing.
5. If a hearing on an emergency or essential matter is cancelled by the court, attorneys will be notified by court staff. It is the attorney's responsibility to notify clients and witnesses of the cancellation. Any cancellation will not change or extend any pending deadlines or scheduling orders. Attorneys should contact the court if they agree to modify other deadlines, and request court approval of their agreement.

### **Communications with the Court Staff and Office of Court Investigators**

6. All business with court staff and the Office of Court Investigators should be handled by telephone or email until further notice. If a bond must be signed, please advise the court staff by telephone for delivery instructions.

### **Guardianships**

7. If guardianship letters are set to expire within the next 30 days, the court, upon written request and review, will sign a 30-day order of extension. All annual reporting and accounting requirements are unchanged.

### **Temporary Administrations**

8. If a temporary administration will expire within the next 30 days, the court, upon written request and review, will sign a 30-day order of extension.

### **General Guidelines**

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 receives an 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 an attorney wishes to utilize a conferencing service for communication, conference, or meeting with court personnel, the attorney must advise the court staff.

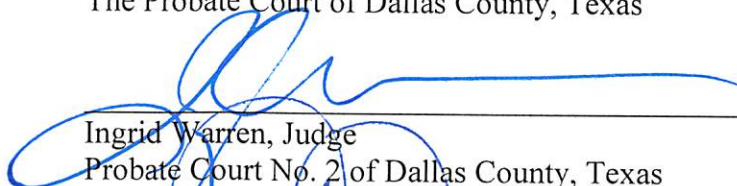
### **Notifications**

12. Notification will be issued when normal operations will resume, and it will be posted on the Dallas County Clerk's website and the Dallas County Probate Courts' website.

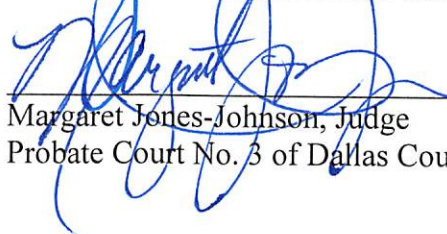
**SO ORDERED** the 24<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020.



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



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



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