



JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURTS DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

Joe Holland, Precinct 1

James R. DePiazza, Precinct 2

James Kerbow, Precinct 3

Harris Hughey, Precinct 4

Mike Oglesby, Precinct 5

Chris Lopez, Precinct 6

DENTON COUNTY JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURTS OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES REGARDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS Issued September 4, 2020

In conjunction with the Denton County Health Department and the Office of Court Administration, the Denton County Justices of the Peace recognize the concerns about COVID-19. As such, the health and safety of the public, and all employees, are of utmost concern and these operational guidelines are hereby established to address these concerns in the following manner:

These guidelines are effective from September 4, 2020 until December 31, 2020.

1. Justice Courts Operations

The Denton County Justices of the Peace offices are currently open for public access. Social distancing will be maintained. Each court has a different occupancy maximum in its lobby. Wearing of masks of some form that covers the mouth and nose is required.

2. If a Person is Sick

Any individual who is exhibiting [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or who thinks they have been exposed to COVID-19 should not appear to any of the Justice of the Peace courts. If you have essential matters, contact the respective court during normal business hours.

3. Vulnerable Persons

Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable populations.

The Justice Courts will, to the extent possible, make all reasonable accommodations for individuals identified as vulnerable populations.

4. Court Proceedings

Trials and hearings are being scheduled and heard in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Texas Supreme Court and the Office of Court Administration. All proceedings in the Denton County Justice Courts will occur remotely unless a party is unable to successfully participate in remote hearings for reasons beyond their control. In that case, accommodations will be made for the party not able to use the current technology the respective court is using.

4. Eviction Cases

Eviction case filings will be accepted and processed in accordance with the CARES Act and the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) order. Current guidelines are as follows:

- a. The CARES Act currently applies to:
- public housing, project-based section 8, Housing Choice Vouchers, LIHTC, etc.
 - rural voucher program
 - properties with federally backed mortgages (HUD, VA, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, etc.)

NOTE: A 30 day notice to vacate is required prior to the filing of any eviction case covered under the CARES Act through December 31, 2020 or the rescinding of the Act.

- b. The CDC order requires the petitioner to provide a sworn statement, which can be in the petition, that the tenant has or has not tendered a declaration claiming to be a covered person under the CDC order.
- c. Any eviction petition filed must include the [CARES Act affidavit](#) and the required CDC statement. **Filings are not complete until all required documents/statements are provided. Citations will not be issued on incomplete filings.**

6. Traffic/Criminal Citations

To avoid coming into the court, defendants can contact the court for options to resolve your citation without the need to appear in person.

7. Contact the Courts

Please refer to the respective Court's website for more information. If you have any questions, please contact the respective court directly.

**** PLEASE NOTE THE ABOVE OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES MAY BE REVISED AT ANYTIME.**

SIGNED on September 4, 2020.



The Honorable James R. DePiazza
Local Administrative Judge

On Behalf of:

- Hon. Joe Holland, Justice of the Peace, Pct. 1
- Hon. James Kerbow, Justice of the Peace, Pct. 3
- Hon. Harris Hughey, Justice of the Peace, Pct. 4
- Hon. Mike Oglesby, Justice of the Peace, Pct. 5
- Hon. Chris Lopez, Justice of the Peace, Pct. 6