



JUDGE CHRISTOPHER W. PONDER

PROBATE COURT No. 1

100 W. WEATHERFORD ST., ROOM 260A

FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76196

(817) 212-7238

**APRIL 30, 2020**

### **VIDEO HEARINGS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS**

In accordance with the instructions of the Texas Supreme Court and Office of Court Administration, Tarrant County Probate Court No. 1 will not conduct any in-person proceedings on non-essential matters until June 1, 2020. The Court will continue to utilize Zoom video hearings for all non-essential matters. To date, only muniments of title and the probating of self-proved wills were permitted to be heard through this video technology. As of this date, however, the Court will entertain requests to hear any type of application or motion. All attorneys and parties should understand the practical limitations of video hearings and be prepared to adapt accordingly.

For scheduling hearings, please follow this process:

1. If there is a will, make sure that it is filed with the Clerk as soon as possible.
2. Set your hearing by sending an email to [probatecourt1@tarrantcounty.com](mailto:probatecourt1@tarrantcounty.com). State in the email the type of hearing requested and the number of expected witnesses, and whether the witnesses will be in the presence of the attorney during the hearing or whether the witness will be at another location.
3. Once confirmed by the Court, e-file a letter with the Clerk that verifies the following:
  - a. date and time of hearing;
  - b. you and your witness(es) have the capability of connecting with video and sound via Zoom.com and provide the email addresses to which the Court should share the meeting request to for the hearing;
  - c. whether or not a notary will be available to swear in your witness (with the witness) or notarize the proof and oath (or that you will review the proof and oath for the witness to include an unsworn declaration); and
4. The Court will send invites via email for the Zoom hearing showing the date and time. This invite includes a link to the hearing.
5. At the conclusion of the hearing, the witness(es) will sign the proof and oath, if appropriate, and the judge will sign the order. The proof and any oath should be filed electronically and the attorney may make arrangements with the Clerk to obtain any letters or a certified copy of the signed order.