

GUIDELINES FOR APPEARING IN THE VIRTUAL COURTROOM OF THE HARDIN COUNTY COURT

Since the arrival of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Texas in March, 2020, many things in our lives have changed, including the way we appear for judicial proceedings. In an effort to keep the wheels of justice moving, while keeping the public and Officers of the Court as safe as possible, the Hardin County Court implemented a Virtual Courtroom in April, 2020. In-person appearances are preferred today. However, we will continue to utilize this Virtual Courtroom technology to the extent possible for safety and convenience of all parties.

To appear in the Hardin County Court Virtual Courtroom, you must have one of the following electronic devices, equipped with a camera, microphone and a stable high-speed internet connection (if you do not, then appear in person!):

- **Computer** **Preferred*
- **Laptop** **Preferred*
- Tablet (such as iPad or Surface Pro)
- Smartphone (such as iPhone or Samsung)

The link to appear in the Virtual Courtroom of the Hardin County Court for Criminal, Probate, Civil or other matters is: <https://app.zconnect.io/r/RX6I5D>

*In the last 6 digits of that link, RXI5D (that is the letter “**I**” between the 6 and the 5)

Click on this link at least five (5) minutes prior to the time you are to appear in Court, enter your first name, last name, select your role (i.e. Defendant, Attorney, etc.), then click ‘Register’. You will wait in the virtual waiting room until admitted into the Virtual Courtroom by the Court or staff. If you do not follow these simple steps properly, you may not be allowed to enter the Virtual Courtroom, resulting at a Capias being issued for ‘Fail to Appear’ and a revocation of your bond.

All parties and Officers of the Court must strictly follow the Guidelines for Appearing in the Virtual Courtroom of the Hardin County Court. These procedures are implemented in order to ensure proper time is allowed for each party appearing before the Court in each case, with the least amount of disorder and interruptions as possible.

>>> SEE NEXT PAGE FOR RULES <<<

FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

1. Click on the link (Page 1) or enter it into your web browser at least 5 minutes prior to your appearance time.
2. You will be in a Virtual Waiting Room until admitted by the Court. If there are several parties in the Virtual Courtroom, the Judge may leave you in the waiting room for a period of time - Please wait there until you are admitted.
3. Your computer audio must remain connected, but muted until called upon, and your video (camera) must always be on unless the Judge allows you to turn it off.
4. Remain on 'MUTE' until called on by the Judge or an Officer of the Court.
5. If your device is on battery power, and the battery level falls below 50% at any time during your virtual appearance, plug it in.
6. You must be dressed appropriately. You are not required to wear a suit or a dress, but you are not allowed to appear shirtless, in your pajamas or wearing a robe.
7. The Judge must always be able to see you from the shoulders up. No hats!
8. You are not allowed to eat or smoke. You may sip on water or other appropriate non-alcoholic beverages from time to time.
9. You must remain attentive without any distractions (turn off the TV/music, do not have small children in the room with you. NO DISTRACTIONS/INTERRUPTIONS!)
10. No outside activities are allowed, including: Driving or riding in a vehicle, Running, Walking around (inside or outside), Talking to someone else, Talking/texting on the phone or other electronic device, Cooking, Surfing the internet, etc.
11. Inappropriate language is not allowed.
12. Only one person may speak at a time – Do not interrupt the Judge, Attorneys, or others while they are speaking.
13. If you have an issue with your connection or some other urgent matter, you may raise your hand (virtually or actually) and you will be called on by the Judge.
14. Recording any Court proceeding is prohibited. This is enforceable by Contempt of Court, carrying a possible punishment of a fine and/or incarceration in jail.

If others wish to view any proceeding, they may do so on the [Hardin County Court](#) YouTube channel where proceedings will be livestreamed upon request by any party. Spectators are strictly prohibited from entering the Virtual Courtroom.

Anyone with questions about appearing in the Virtual Courtroom of the Hardin County Court, please contact my staff at least one day prior to your appearance date and we will be more than happy to assist you. *Do not call the day of Court!

Very respectfully,



Wayne McDaniel
Hardin County Judge

01/01/2022