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ATASCOSA COUNTY COURT AT LAW



**ATASCOSA COUNTY
JUSTICE CENTER**

1405 CAMPBELL AVENUE
JOURDANTON, TEXAS 78026
OFFICE: 830 • 769 • 4232
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BOB BRENDDEL

PRESIDING JUDGE

Criminal Defense Attorney

RE: Information regarding re-opening the criminal dockets pursuant to COVID-19 Operating Plan

Please review the information provided below. Please contact the Court if you have any questions or concerns.

COVID-19 Operation Plan

Please find the COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Atascosa County Judiciary on Atascosa County Court at Law website. If this Court, the Court's staff, County Attorney's Office or other courthouse personnel are not complying with the COVID-19 operation plan, please notify this Court at once.

Court Appointments

All appointments for court appointed attorneys will be given before court appearances. **DO NOT APPEAR AT ANY DOCKET EXPECTING AN IN-PERSON APPOINTMENT.**

COVID-19 VULNERABLE PERSONS

If you or your client are over age 65 or have serious underlying health conditions making you or your client vulnerable to COVID-19, you must contact the Court at 830-769-4232. The Court will make special accommodations for COVID-19 vulnerable persons.

No Jury Trials

Currently, the Texas Supreme Court does not allow jury trials for this Court. There is no guidance explaining when jury trials may resume.

Cases Should be Handled Remotely

The COVID-19 Operation Plan allows in-person hearings for non-essential criminal matters with mandatory precaution measures. But you should attempt to handle your cases remotely to avoid in-person court appearances. If you need a hearing or a plea, the Court presumes those matters will be conducted via a scheduled Zoom Videoconference hearing. However, the Court will be open and handling matters that are scheduled on the docket, but could not be resolved remotely.

Mandatory Face Coverings

Face coverings are mandatory while you are in the courthouse. Please bring your own face covering to the courthouse. Also encourage your clients to bring their own face coverings.

Mandatory Social Distancing

The courtroom is marked off with seating at appropriate distances. Please do not move the chairs in the courtroom.

Attorney conferring space is available that complies with social distancing. But, as on any normal court date, the conferring space is first come, first served.

Appearance Times for Dockets

Appearance times for dockets will be scheduled throughout the day. The Court staff will attempt to schedule cases according to the cases' attorney. For example, if you have three cases on one day, all three cases should be scheduled at the same time – not one in the morning and two in the afternoon. Please let the court know if we mis-schedule your cases at different times.

Waivers of Arraignment

Historically, this Court requires in-person arraignments. During COVID-19, you may submit a written waiver of arraignment, plea of not guilty and reset instead of appearing in person at the arraignment docket

Signatures on behalf of your Client

If you wish, you may - with the consent of your client - sign resets and waivers of arraignment on behalf of your client.

Failure to Appear

The Court will issue a warrant for the arrest of your client and forfeit your client's bond if your client fails to appear and does not otherwise remotely resolve their scheduled hearing.

Your cooperation and patience are appreciated as we learn how to re-open and operate with the limitations and requirements of our COVID-19 operating plan. If you have ideas that may improve how we handle our criminal cases, please share your ideas with the Court.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Brendel", written in a cursive style.

Judge Bob Brendel