

HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

1-1 COURT DIRECTORY

No. 1	Sonia Lopez	713-274-1345
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline	
	Houston, Texas 77002	
	Clerk: Jesse Salas	713-274-1345
	Clerk: Donna Hernandez	713-274-1345
	Trial Coordinator: Melissa Hammond.....	832-927-1711
	Bailiff: Deputy Willie Hughes.....	832-927-1701
No. 2	Jim F. Kovach	713-274-1349
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline, Suite 740	
	Houston, Texas 77002-1900	
	Clerk: Angeles Villafranca	713-274-1349
	Clerk: Maria De La Rosa	713-274-1349
	Trial Coordinator: Grace Cantada	832-927-1722
	Court Reporter: Kevin Bruzewski.....	832-927-1723
	Bailiff: Anthony Hemmitt	832-927-1724
No. 3	LaShawn A. Williams	713-274-1353
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline, Suite 740	
	Houston, Texas 77002-1900	
	Clerk: Orion Ford	713-274-1353
	Clerk: Elizabeth Lopez.....	713-274-1353
	Trial Coordinator: Vanessa Richardson	832-927-1732
	Court Reporter: Laura Cutherell	832-927-1733
	Bailiff: Deputy Mark Linton.....	832-927-1734
No. 4	Manpreet Monica Singh	713-274-1358
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline, Suite 740	
	Houston, Texas 77002-1900	
	Clerk: Christina Casiano.....	713-274-1358
	Clerk: Mariela Santibanez	713-274-1358
	Trial Coordinator: Rick Wilson.....	832-927-1704
	Court Reporter: Jill Bartek.....	832-927-1743
	Bailiff: Valerie Jenkins	832-927-1744
No. 5	Jermaine S. Thomas, Sr.	713-274-0893
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline, Suite 740	
	Houston, Texas 77002-1900	
	Clerk: Sarah Gray	713-274-0893
	Clerk: Valerie Flores	713-274-0893
	Trial Coordinator: Kayla Gomez.....	832-927-1007
	Court Reporter: Lettie Witter	832-927-1008
	Bailiff: Deputy Willie Hughes.....	832-927-1701
	Associate Elaine Palmer	832-927-2960
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline, Suite 740	
	Houston, Texas 77002-1900	
	Trial Coordinator: Sofia Mendez.....	832-927-2960

HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

1-2 Local Rules

(Current as of March 2026)



LOCAL RULES OF THE HARRIS COUNTY CIVIL COURTS AT LAW

As amended through December 8, 2023

RULE 1. OBJECTIVE

Purpose of Rules. The objective of the Local Rules of the Harris County Civil Courts at Law is to obtain a just, fair, equitable, and impartial adjudication of the rights of litigants under established principles of substantive law and established rules of procedural law. To the end that this objective may be attained with greatest dispatch and, as may be practicable, with the least expense to litigants and the county, these rules shall be applied to ensure that, so far as reasonably possible, all matters are brought to trial or final disposition in conformity with this objective.

RULE 2. REPORTS

The County Clerk shall supply to all Harris County Civil Court at Law Judges, on a monthly basis, information concerning the number of filings, dispositions, trials, and other judicial activities in each county civil court at law.

RULE 3. FLOW OF CASES

3.1.1 Filing and Assignment. Upon being filed, a case in the county civil courts at law shall be assigned randomly to the docket of one of the courts. Once assigned to a court, a case will remain on the docket of that court for all purposes unless transferred as provided in Rule 3.2.

3.2 Transfer or Referral

3.2.1 Prior Judgment. Any claim for relief based upon a prior judgment shall be assigned to the court of original judgment.

3.2.2 Nonsuit. If a case is filed in which there is a substantial identity of parties and causes of action as in a prior nonsuited case, the later case shall be assigned to the court where the prior case was pending.

3.2.3 Consolidation. A motion to consolidate cases shall be heard in the court where the lowest numbered case is pending. If the motion is granted, the

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consolidated case will be given the number of the lowest numbered case and assigned to the court in which that case is pending.

3.2.4 Severance. If a severance is granted, the new case will be assigned to the court where the original case is pending, bearing the same file date and the same number as the original case with a numeric suffix designation; provided, however, that when a severed case has previously been consolidated from another court, the case shall upon severance be assigned to the court from which it was consolidated.

3.2.5 By Agreement. Any case may be transferred from one court to another court by written order of the Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law division or by written order of the judge of the court from which the case is transferred; provided, however, that in the latter instance, the transfer must be with the written consent of the court to which the case is being transferred.

3.2.6 Presiding for Another. In cases where a court presides for another court, the case shall remain pending in the original court, except as follows: 1) in any hearing on a motion for contempt, the judge who issued the order which is claimed to have been disobeyed must preside over the motion for contempt, except as otherwise provided in Sec. 21.002, Tex. Gov. Code and 2) in any hearing on a temporary restraining order, temporary injunction or writ of mandamus and/or certiorari, the judge who issues the order thereby consents pursuant to Local Rule 3.2.5 for the case to be transferred from the original court.

3.2.7 Improper Court. If a case is on the docket of a county civil court at law by any manner other than as prescribed by these rules, the Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law or Administrative Judge of the Harris County Courts shall transfer the case to the proper court.

3.2.8 Associate Judges. Any eviction case, or other proceeding related to an eviction case, that is filed in a county civil court at law after the date of the adoption of these rules is eligible for referral to an Associate Judge appointed pursuant to Local Rule 7, subject to any limitations imposed by that Rule or any applicable statute.

3.3 Motions

3.3.1 Form. Motions shall be in writing and shall be accompanied by a proposed order granting the relief sought. The proposed order shall be a separate instrument, unless the entire motion, order, signature lines, and certificate of service are all on one page.

3.3.2 Submission. In the discretion of the court, motions shall state a date of submission, which shall be at least 10 days from filing, except on leave of court. The motion will be submitted to the court for filing on that date or later.

3.3.3 Response. Responses shall be in writing, and shall be filed at least three (3) working days before the date of submission, except on leave of court. Failure to file

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a response may be considered a representation of no opposition.

3.3.4 Oral argument. If a party views it as necessary, a request for oral argument must accompany the motion or response. The court may grant that request or order oral argument on its own motion. A request for an oral argument is not a response under Rule 3.3.3.

3.4 Trials

3.4.1 Manner of Setting. Cases shall be set for trial by order of the court.

3.4.2 Date of Setting. Cases shall be set for trial for a date certain. If a case is not assigned to trial by the Friday after the date it was set, whether because of a continuance or because it was not reached, the court shall reset the case to a date certain. Unless all parties agree otherwise, the new setting must comply with all requisites of T.R.C.P. 245.

3.4.3 Preference for ADR. In the discretion of the court, preference in setting cases for trial shall be given to matters in which the parties have participated in alternate dispute resolution procedures.

3.4.4 Assignment to Trial. A case is assigned to trial when counsel are called to the court to commence the jury or non-jury trial on the merits. For purposes of engaged counsel, no court may have more than one case assigned to trial at any one time.

3.4.5 Dead Weeks. Except with the consent of all parties, no cases will be assigned to trial on the merits during:

- i. The week of the spring Eleventh Administrative Judicial Conference;
- ii. The week of the State Bar Convention (June);
- iii. The week of the Conference of the Judicial Section (September); and
- iv. The last week of December.

3.6 Dismissal Dockets. The following cases are eligible for dismissal for want of prosecution pursuant to T.R.C.P. 165a:

- i. Cases on file for more than 180 days in which no answer has been filed or is required by law;
- ii. Cases that have been on file for more than 18 months and are not set for trial;
- iii. Cases in which a party or his attorney has failed to take any action specified by the court.

3.7 Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law

3.7.1 The Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law shall be elected for a term of one calendar year by the judges of the county civil courts at law in the regular December meeting of the judges of the county civil courts at law.

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3.7.2 The Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law may by written order designate any other judge of the division to act in his/her place if he/she is absent or unable to act. The judge so designated shall have all the duties and authority granted by these Rules to the Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law during the period of the designation.

RULE 4. CONFLICTING ENGAGEMENTS

4.1 Inter-County. The rules of the Eleventh Administrative Judicial Region control conflicts in settings of all cases between a Harris County court and a court not in Harris County.

4.2 Intra-County. Among the trial courts sitting in Harris County:

- i. Trial/Trial. A trial setting that is assigned takes precedence over a conflicting trial setting not yet assigned.
- ii. Trial/Non-Trial. Trial settings take precedence over conflicting non-trial settings except as provided herein.
- iii. Non-Trial/Pre-Trial. The matter that was first filed, regardless of cause number, shall take precedence over non-trial settings, non-court ordered alternate dispute resolution, and non-court ordered depositions.

4.3 Waiver. The court with precedence may yield.

4.4 Lead Counsel. This rule operates only where lead counsel, as defined by T.R.C.P. 8, is affected, unless the court expands coverage to other counsel.

4.5 Reporting of Conflicting Engagements. It is the duty of counsel to report promptly to a court immediately upon learning of a conflicting engagement that might preclude that counsel's availability for trial.

RULE 5. VACATIONS OF COUNSEL

5.1 The County Civil Courts at Law will honor the written designations for summer vacation weeks and/or non-summer vacation weeks filed with the County Clerk or District Clerk pursuant to the Local Rules of the Civil Trial Division of the Judicial District Courts of Harris County, except for cases preferentially set for trial prior to the vacation designation. An attorney may designate not more than four weeks during a calendar year as vacation, during which that attorney will not be assigned to trial or required to engage in any pretrial proceedings. This rule operates only where lead counsel, as defined by T.R.C.P. 8, is affected, unless the trial court expands coverage to other counsel.

5.1.1 Summer vacations. Summer vacation weeks so designated will protect the attorney from trials during those summer weeks, even if an order setting the case for trial was signed before the vacation designation was filed, except in cases preferentially set for trial prior to the vacation designation.

5.1.2 Non-summer vacations. Non-summer vacation weeks may not run

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consecutively for more than two weeks at a time. Non-summer vacation weeks so designated will not protect an attorney from a trial by an order signed before the date the designation is filed.

RULE 6. MEETINGS

The judges of the County Civil Courts at Law shall meet regularly each month at such times and places as the Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law may direct by a written notice distributed at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting, except in the case of an emergency.

RULE 7. ASSOCIATE JUDGES

7.1 Pursuant to Texas Government Code § 54A.102(d), the County Civil Courts at Law establish this rule to govern Associate Judge positions to serve all County Civil Courts at Law of Harris County.

7.2 Approval Required. The appointment of each Associate Judge shall be made by approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the elected Judges for the County Civil Courts at Law of Harris County.

7.3 Qualifications. The qualifications for an Associate Judge shall be governed by Texas Government Code § 54A.103. In addition, to qualify for an appointment as an Associate Judge to serve all county civil courts at law, a person must possess the following:

- i. significant civil law experience, including knowledge of statutory and constitutional procedure, court trial procedure, the Texas Code of Civil Procedure, and the Texas Property Code;
- ii. the ability to conduct objective hearings; evaluate facts; and apply knowledge of the law to issues arising in civil cases; and
- iii. the capability of handling high volume dockets with minimal supervision.

7.4 Compensation. The compensation for an Associate Judge shall be governed by Texas Government Code § 54A.104.

7.5 Termination. The termination of an Associate Judge shall be governed by Texas Government Code § 54A.105.

7.6. Cases That May Be Referred. A Presiding Judge of a County Civil Court at Law in Harris County may refer any eviction case, or other proceeding related to an eviction case, to an Associate Judge for resolution subject to Local Rule 3.2.8. Any party's objection to an Associate Judge hearing a trial on the merits in an eviction or eviction-related proceeding must be filed in writing in accordance with Texas Government Code § 54A.106.

7.7 Powers. The powers of an Associate Judge shall be governed by Texas Government Code § 54A.108.

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7.8. All other requirements and limitations on Associate Judges pursuant to Subchapter B of Texas Government Code Chapter 54A shall apply.

RULE 8. EFFECTIVE DATE AND AMENDMENTS

8.1 Effective Date. These rules shall become effective on December 1, 2023.

8.2 Cross-Reference. Any reference in these rules to a statute or a court rule shall also apply to any successor statute or court rule, whether by recodification, revision or amendment.

8.3 Applicability. The foregoing rules are applicable to both jury and non-jury cases.

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HARRIS COUNTY

LOCAL RULES OF THE COUNTY COURTS

concerning the

ELECTRONIC FILING OF COURT DOCUMENTS

PART 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Rule 1.1 Purpose

These rules govern the electronic filing and service of court documents, by any method other than fax filing, in Harris County. These rules are adopted pursuant to Rule 3a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure and may be known as the “Harris County Local Rules of the County Courts Concerning the Electronic Filing of Court Documents.”

Rule 1.2 Effect on Existing Local Rules

These rules are adopted in addition to any other local rules of the county courts in Harris County. These rules do not supersede or replace any previously adopted local rules.

Rule 1.3 Electronic Filing Optional Unless Ordered by Court

(a) Except as provided by subsection (b) below, the electronic filing and serving of court documents is wholly optional.

(b) Upon the motion of a party and for good cause shown, a county court may order the parties in a particular case to electronically file and serve court documents that are permitted to be electronically filed under Rule 3.3.

PART 2. DEFINITIONS

Rule 2.1 Specific Terms

The following definitions apply to these rules:

(a) “Convenience fee” is a fee charged in connection with electronic filing that is in addition to regular filing fees. A Convenience Fee charged by the County Clerk will be considered as a court cost.

(b) “County clerk” means the Harris County Clerk.

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- (c) “Digitized signature” means a graphic image of a handwritten signature.
 - (d) “Document” means a pleading, plea, motion, application, request, exhibit, brief, memorandum of law, paper, or other instrument in paper form or electronic form. The term does not include court orders.
 - (e) “Electronic filing” is a process by which a filer files a court document with the county clerk’s office by means of an online computer transmission of the document in electronic form. For purposes of these rules, the process does not include the filing of faxed documents which is described as the “electronic filing of documents” in Section 51.801, Government Code.
 - (f) “Electronic filing service provider (EFSP)” is a business entity that provides electronic filing services and support to its customers (filers). An attorney or law firm may act as an EFSP.
 - (g) “Electronic order” means a computerized, non-paper court order that a judge signs by applying his or her digitized signature to the order. A digitized signature is a graphic image of the judge’s handwritten signature.
 - (h) “Electronic service” is a method of serving a document upon a party in a case by electronically transmitting the document to that party’s e-mail address.
 - (i) “Electronically file” means to file a document by means of electronic filing.
 - (j) “Electronically serve” means to serve a document by means of electronic service.
 - (k) “Filer” means a person who files a document, including an attorney.
 - (l) “Party” means a person appearing in any case or proceeding, whether represented or appearing pro se, or an attorney of record for a party in any case or proceeding.
 - (m) “Regular filing fees” are those filing fees charged in connection with traditional filing.
 - (n) “Rules” are the Harris County Local Rules of the County Courts concerning the Electronic Filing of Documents
 - (o) “Traditional court order” means a court order that is on paper.
 - (p) “Traditional filing” is a process by which a filer files a paper document with a clerk or a judge.

Rule 2.2 Application to Pro Se Litigants

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The term “counsel” shall apply to an individual litigant in the event a party appears pro se.

PART 3. APPLICABILITY

Rule 3.1 Scope

(a) These rules apply to the filing of documents in all non-juvenile civil cases, including cases that are appeals from lower courts, before the various county courts with jurisdiction in Harris County.

(b) These rules apply to the filing of documents in cases before the various county courts referred to in paragraph (a) above that are subsequently assigned to associate judges or any other similar judicial authorities.

Rule 3.2 Clerks

These rules apply only to the filing of documents with the county clerk. These rules do not apply to the filing of documents directly with a judge as contemplated by TEX. R. CIV. P. 74.

Rule 3.3 Documents That May Be Electronically Filed

(a) A document that can be filed in a traditional manner with the county clerk may be electronically filed with the exception of the following documents:

- i) citations or writs bearing the seal of the court;
- ii) bonds;
- iii) subpoenas;
- iv) proof of service of subpoenas;
- v) documents to be presented to a court in camera, solely for the purpose of obtaining a ruling on the discoverability of such documents;
- vi) documents sealed pursuant to TEX. R. CIV. P. 76a; and
- vii) documents to which access is otherwise restricted by law or court order, including a document filed in a proceeding under Chapter 33, Family Code.

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(b) A motion to have a document sealed, as well as any response to such a motion, may be electronically filed.

Rule 3.4. Documents Containing Signatures

(a) A document that is required to be verified, notarized, acknowledged, sworn to, or made under oath may be electronically filed only as a scanned image.

(b) A document that requires the signatures of opposing parties (such as a Rule 11 agreement) may be electronically filed only as a scanned image.

(c) Any affidavit or other paper described in Rule 3.4(a) or (b) that is to be attached to an electronically filed document may be scanned and electronically filed along with the underlying document.

(d) Where a filer has electronically filed a scanned image under this rule, a court may require the filer to properly file the document in a traditional manner with the county clerk. A third party may request the court in which the matter is pending to allow inspection of a document maintained by the filer.

PART 4. FILING MECHANICS

Rule 4.1 TexFile

TexFile

(a) To become registered to electronically file documents, filers must follow registration procedures outlined by TexFile. The procedure can be accessed from TexFile's website at www.TexFile.com.

(b) Filers do not electronically file documents directly with the county clerk. Rather, filers indirectly file a document with the county clerk by electronically transmitting the document to an electronic filing service provider (EFSP) which then electronically transmits the document to TexFile which then electronically transmits the document to the county clerk. A filer filing or serving a document must have a valid account with an EFSP and with TexFile.

(c) Consistent with standards promulgated by the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT), TexFile will specify the permissible formats for documents that will be electronically filed and electronically served.

(d) Filers who electronically file documents will pay regular filing fees to the county clerk indirectly through TexFile by a method set forth by TexFile.

(e) An EFSP may charge filers a convenience fee to electronically file documents. This fee will be in addition to regular filing fees.

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(f) TexFile will charge filers a convenience fee to electronically file documents. This fee will be in addition to regular filing fees and will be in an amount not to exceed the amount set forth by the agreement by the Office of Court Administration.

(g) The county clerk may charge filers a convenience fee to electronically file documents. This fee will be in addition to regular filing fees, credit card fees, or other fees.

Rule 4.2 Signatures

(a) Upon completion of the initial registration procedures, each filer will be issued a confidential and unique electronic identifier. Each filer must use his or her identifier in order to electronically file documents. Use of the identifier to electronically file documents constitutes a “digital signature” on the particular document.

(b) The attachment of a digital signature on an electronically-filed document is deemed to constitute a signature on the document for purposes of signature requirements imposed by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure or any other law. The person whose name appears first in the signature block of an initial pleading is deemed to be the attorney in charge for the purposes of Texas Rules of Civil Procedure 8, unless otherwise designated. The digital signature on any document filed is deemed to be the signature of the attorney whose name appears first in the signature block of the document for the purpose of Texas Rules of Civil Procedure 13 and 57.

(c) A digital signature on an electronically-filed document is deemed to constitute a signature by the filer for the purpose of authorizing the payment of document filing fees.

Rule 4.3 Time Document is Filed

(a) A filer may electronically transmit a document through an EFSP to TexFile 24 hours per day each and every day of the year, except during brief periods of state-approved scheduled maintenance which will usually occur in the early hours of Sunday morning.

(b) Upon sending an electronically-transmitted document to a filer's EFSP, the filer is deemed to have delivered the document to the county clerk and, subject to Rule 4.3(h), the document is deemed to be filed. If a document is electronically transmitted to the filer's EFSP and is electronically transmitted on or before the last day for filing the same, the document, if received by the county clerk not more than ten days tardily, shall be filed by the county clerk and deemed filed in time. A transmission report by the filer to the filer's EFSP shall be prima facie evidence of date and time of transmission.

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- (c) On receipt of a filer's document, the filer's EFSP must send the document to TexFile in the required electronic file format along with an indication of the time the filer sent the document to the EFSP and the filer's payment information. TexFile will electronically transmit to the filer an "acknowledgment" that the document has been received by TexFile. The acknowledgment will note the date and time that the electronically-transmitted document was received by TexFile.
- (d) Upon receiving a document from a filer's EFSP, TexFile shall electronically transmit the document to the county clerk. If the document was not properly formatted, TexFile will transmit a warning to the filer's EFSP.
- (e) Not later than the first business day after receiving a document from TexFile, the county clerk shall decide whether the document will be accepted for filing. The county clerk shall accept the document for filing provided that the document is not misdirected and complies with all filing requirements. The county clerk shall handle electronically-transmitted documents that are filed in connection with an affidavit of inability to afford court costs in the manner required by TEX. R. CIV. P. 145. If the county clerk fails to accept or reject a document within the time period, the document is deemed to have been accepted and filed.
- (f) If the document is accepted for filing, the county clerk shall note the date and time of filing which, with the exception of subsection (h) below, shall be the date and time that the filer transmitted the document to the filer's EFSP. The county clerk shall inform TexFile of its action the same day action is taken. TexFile shall, on that same day, electronically transmit to the filer's EFSP a "confirmation" that the document has been accepted for filing by the county clerk. The EFSP will electronically transmit the confirmation to the filer. This confirmation will include an electronically "file-marked" copy of the front page of the document showing the date and time the county clerk considers the document to have been filed.
- (g) If the document is not accepted for filing, the county clerk shall inform TexFile of its action, and the reason for such action, the same day action is taken. TexFile shall, on that same day, electronically transmit to the filer's EFSP an "alert" that the document was not accepted along with the reason the document was not accepted. The EFSP will electronically transmit the alert to the filer.
- (h) Except in cases of injunction, attachment, garnishment, sequestration, or distress proceedings, documents that serve to commence a civil suit will not be deemed to have been filed on Sunday when the document is electronically transmitted to the filer's EFSP, TexFile, or the county clerk on Sunday. Such documents will be deemed to have been filed on the succeeding Monday.

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Rule 4.4 Filing Deadlines Not Altered

The electronic filing of a document does not alter any filing deadlines.

Rule 4.5 Multiple Documents

(a) Except as provided by subsection (b) below, a filer may include only one document in an electronic transmission to TexFile.

(b) A filer may electronically transmit a document to TexFile that includes another document as an attachment (e.g., a motion to which is attached a brief in support of the motion).

Rule 4.6 Official Document

(a) The county clerk's file for a particular case may contain a combination of electronically-filed documents and traditionally-filed documents.

(b) The county clerk may maintain and make available electronically-filed documents in any manner allowed by law.

Rule 4.7 E-mail Address Required

In addition to the information required on a pleading by TEX. R. CIV. P. 57, a filer must include an e-mail address on any electronically-filed document.

Rule 4.8 Document Format

(a) Electronically-filed documents must be computer-formatted as specified by TexFile. Electronically-filed documents must also be formatted for printing on 8½-inch by 11-inch paper.

(b) An electronically-filed pleading is deemed to comply with TEX. R. CIV. P. 45.

PART 5. SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS OTHER THAN CITATION

Rule 5.1 Electronic Service of Documents Permissible

(a) In addition to the methods of serving documents (other than the citation to be served upon the filing of a cause of action) set forth in TEX. R. CIV. P. 21a, a filer may serve documents upon another party in the case by electronically transmitting the document to that party at the party's email address. Service in such a manner is known as "electronic service," and is permissible in the circumstances set out in paragraph (b) below.

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(b) Documents may be electronically served upon a party only where that party has agreed to receive electronic service or where the court has ordered the parties to electronically serve documents.

(c) By virtue of electronically filing a document or serving a document or by agreeing to accept service, a filer additionally agrees to provide information regarding any change in his or her e-mail address to TexFile, the county clerk, and all parties in the case.

(d) A party who electronically files a document is not required to electronically serve documents upon other parties unless the court has ordered the parties to electronically serve documents.

(e) A filer may electronically serve a document in instances where the document is traditionally filed as well as in instances where the document is electronically filed.

Rule 5.2 Completion of Service and Date of Service

(a) Electronic service shall be complete upon transmission of the document by the filer to the party at the party's e-mail address.

(b) Except as provided by subsection (c) below, the date of service shall be the date the electronic service is complete.

(c) When electronic service is complete after 5:00 p.m. (recipient's time), then the date of service shall be deemed to be the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

Rule 5.3 Time for Action After Service

Whenever a party has the right or is required to do some act within a prescribed period of time after service of a document upon the party and that document is electronically served, then three days shall be added to the prescribed period of time.

Rule 5.4 Certification of Service

(a) Documents to be electronically served upon another party shall be served before the time or at the same time that the document is filed.

(b) A filer who electronically serves a document upon another party shall make a written certification of such service that shall accompany the document when that document is filed. The written certification shall include, in addition to any other requirements imposed by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, the following:

(i) the filer's e-mail address or telecopier (facsimile machine) number;

(ii) the recipient's e-mail address;

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(iii) the date and time of electronic service; and

(iv) a statement that the document was electronically served and that the electronic transmission was reported as complete.

PART 6. ELECTRONIC ORDERS AND VIEWING OF ELECTRONICALLY-FILED DOCUMENTS

Rule 6.1 Courts Authorized to Make Electronic Orders

(a) A judge may electronically sign an order by applying his or her digitized signature to the order. Judges are not required to electronically sign orders.

(b) Upon electronically signing an order, the judge shall electronically forward the order to the county clerk who may treat the electronic order as the official copy of the order. Alternatively, the county clerk may print the electronic order and treat the printed order as the official copy of the order.

(c) The county clerk may electronically scan a traditional court order. The scanned court order may then serve as the official copy of the court order. The county clerk is not required to electronically scan traditional court orders in order to create official electronic court orders. Electronic scanning of traditional court orders is at the option of the county clerk.

Rule 6.2 Viewing of Electronically-filed Documents

(a) The county clerk shall ensure that all the records of the court, except those made confidential or privileged by law or statute, may be viewed in some format by all persons for free.

(b) Independent of the TexFile system and the requirement of viewing access described in subsection (a), the county clerk may choose to provide for both filers and the general public to electronically view documents or court orders that have been electronically filed or scanned. Where such provision has been made, persons may electronically view documents or court orders that have been electronically filed or scanned.

(c) Nothing in this rule allows for the viewing of documents or court orders, in any form, that are legally confidential (e.g., papers in mental health dealings) or otherwise restricted by judicial rule or order.

HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

1-2 Local Rules

(Current as of March 2026)

PART 7. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Rule 7.1 Assigned Court to Resolve Disputes

In the event a dispute should arise involving the application of these rules or various electronic filing issues, the court assigned to the case in which the dispute arises shall decide any dispute.

Rule 7.2 Rule Guiding Interpretation

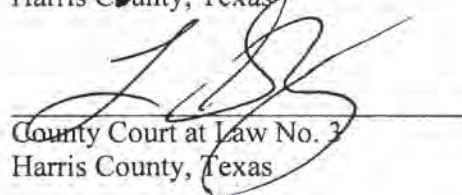
These rules shall be liberally construed so as to avoid undue prejudice to any person on account of using the electronic filing system or sending or receiving electronic service in good faith.

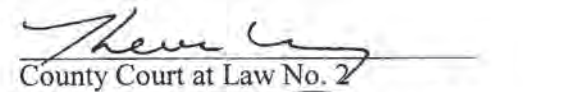
ADOPTION OF RULES

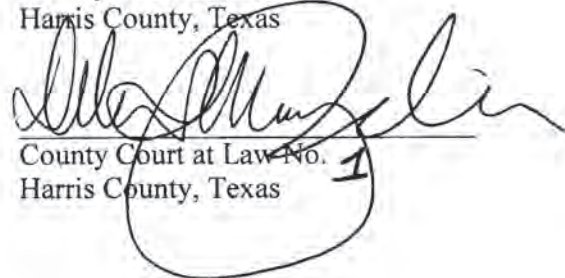
The foregoing “Harris County Local Rules of the County Courts concerning the Electronic Filing of Documents” are hereby adopted by the undersigned judges in Harris County on this day 30th of October, 2013 and submitted to the Supreme Court of Texas for approval.

These rules shall become effective upon their approval by the Supreme Court of Texas.


County Court at Law No. 4
Harris County, Texas


County Court at Law No. 3
Harris County, Texas


County Court at Law No. 2
Harris County, Texas


County Court at Law No. 1
Harris County, Texas

HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

1-3:1 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 1

Hon. Sonia Lopez

COUNTY COURTS
AT LAW — CIVIL

JUDGE'S NAME: HON. SONIA LOPEZ

COURT NAME | NUMBER: CIVIL COURT AT LAW 1

TYPES OF CASES HEARD:

STAFF:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>	<u>PHONE NUMBER</u>
Jesse Salas	Clerk	AskCivil@cco.hctx.net	713-274-1345
Donna Hernandez	Clerk	AskCivil@cco.hctx.net	713-274-1345
Melissa Hammond	Trial Coordinator	Melissa_Hammond@ccl.hctx.net	832-927-1711
Deputy Willie Hughes	Bailiff	Lettie_Witter@ccl.hctx.net	832-927-1701

YEAR LICENSED: 2015

YEAR ELECTED/APPOINTED: DEC. 11, 2025

HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

1-3:2 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Jim F. Kovach

JUDGE'S NAME: HON. JIM F. KOVACH

COURT NAME | NUMBER: COUNTY CIVIL COURT AT LAW | No. 2

TYPES OF CASES HEARD: CIVIL

COURT ADDRESS: 201 CAROLINE STREET, 5TH FLOOR, HOUSTON TX 77002

STAFF:



NAME	POSITION	EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER
Angeles Villafranca	Clerk	AskCivil@cco.hctx.net	713-274-1349
Maria De La Rosa	Clerk	AskCivil@cco.hctx.net	713-274-1349
Grace Cantada	Trial Coordinator	Grace_Cantada@ccl.hctx.net	832-927-1722
Kevin Bruzewski	Court Reporter	Kevin_Bruzewski@ccl.hctx.net	832-927-1723
Anthony Hemmitt	Bailiff		832-927-1724

YEAR LICENSED: 1991

YEAR ELECTED/APPOINTED: Originally elected in 2018 and re-elected in 2022.

PREVIOUS LEGAL EXPERIENCE:

Managing Partner - Dillard, McElvaney & Kovach, LLP 1993 - 2002
Managing Partner - McElvaney & Kovach, LLP 2002 - 2014
Managing Member - Kovach Law Firm, PLLC 2014 - 2018
Primary Practice Area: Commercial Litigation

Who or what inspired you to be a judge?

My decision was based on a desire to make sure all residents and businesses are treated fairly and appropriately when appearing in court.

Any court pet peeves? What are they?

Parties should always submit a proposed Order for the relief they are requesting to be granted or denied.

What is your preferred procedure for contacting the court in a true emergency?

Phone call to the clerk's office and/or trial coordinator's office.

HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

1-3:2 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Jim F. Kovach

Any other court procedures not outlined in your Local Rules that an attorney appearing before you should be aware of?

Always submit a proposed Order to the court with your motion or response to a motion.

Any special suggestions, admonitions, or recommendations you would make to lawyers appearing before you?

Always refer to the court's website for more information on court procedures – see link below

Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 2.