



111 Logsdon • Andrews, Texas 79714

Judge Debbie Gomez  
Clerk Mary Escovedo

(432)524-2791 FAX (432) 523-2033

[www.cityofandrews.org](http://www.cityofandrews.org)

TO: 7<sup>th</sup> Administrative Judicial Region

December 29, 2020

RE: Criteria for Conducting Hearings

All reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely will continue to be in effect as found in the operating plan established May 12, 2020. Hearings are set up via Skype or Zoom. On the rare time when an in-person hearing takes place, safety measures are in place. The Bench is equipped with a glass partition and all individuals are screened in accordance with operating plan. No more than 2 persons allowed in Courtroom. Area is cleaned and disinfected. If a defendant is unable to participate in a remote hearing **beyond the court's control** then the following proceedings will apply.

**Court Extensions:** Defendants not contesting their case are being given 30-day extensions by phone to pay. Within those 30 days, they must contact the court by mail or email to present their plea, pay and/or give explanation in writing if they will not be able to pay. ZOOM meeting will be set with Judge if further extensions, indigent hearing, community service or other options should be considered. If defendant doesn't have access to a smart phone or is not capable of using technology, only then will an in-person hearing be set in the court room.

**Jail Magistrate:** All arraignments are by SKYPE only. If the computers are down then the Judge will go to the jail and only access the building by the outside door set only for judges. Defendants are seen via a non-contact room that is separated with a glass partition between the Judge and inmate that has an electronic microphone/speaker (not free flowing).

**Juvenile Hearings:** All hearings are by ZOOM with a parent or guardian present. Parental summons will give Zoom hearing information. If the parent or guardian does not have access to a computer or smart phone, then they will be allowed to appear in person. Only one parent or guardian is allowed with defendant in the court room.

**Bench Trials:** All hearings are by ZOOM. If they do not have access to a computer or smart phone or not capable of using technology, then they will be allowed to appear in person. Only the defendant, bailiff, and Judge in the Council chambers that is converted to the court room and equipped with technology and safety measures. All others will remote in by ZOOM. No more than 8 people total are allowed in the Council chambers at any one time and will follow the safety protocol found in the Operating plan.

**Jury Trials:** At this time, Andrews Municipal Court is not doing Jury Trials until such time as these can be done safely.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie K. Gomez". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Debbie Gomez  
Presiding Judge