



CITY OF DALLAS

LOCAL RULES

CITY OF DALLAS MUNICIPAL COURT

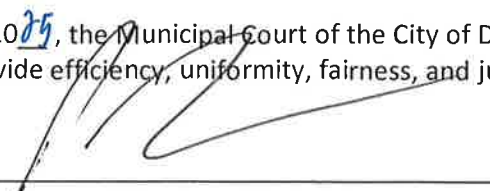
(As amended, January 21, 2025)

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Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge

LOCAL RULES OF THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF THE CITY OF DALLAS, TEXAS

Be it known that on this, the 21st day of January, 2025, the Municipal Court of the City of Dallas, Texas has adopted its Local Rules of Court, in order to provide efficiency, uniformity, fairness, and justice in conducting the business of the Court.



Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge

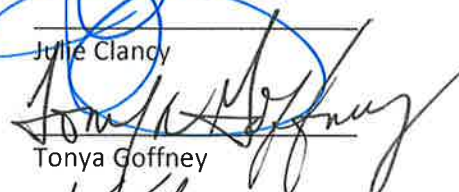
Municipal Judges:




Demetrius Blacklock



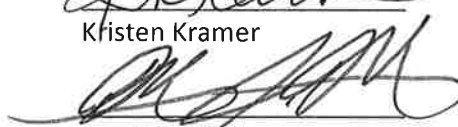
Julie Clancy



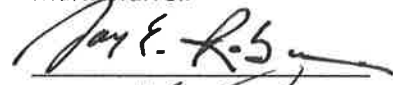
Tonya Goffney




Kristen Kramer



Mark Murrell



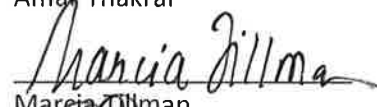
Jay E. Robinson



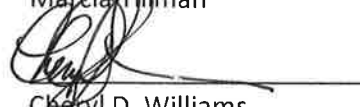
Preston W. Robinson



Amar Thakrar



Marcia Tillman



Cheryl D. Williams

Associate Municipal Judges:

Helen Arizor

Melodee Armstrong

Tifanee Baker

Kevin Brooks

Lana Byrne

Desmond Cooks

Ashlei Gradney

Amy Castle Gray

Edward Johnson

Manuel Haddad

Erane LaSusa

Brad McClelland

Daniel E. McDonald, Jr.

Tim Menchu

Stephanie Neal

Luis Pumarejo

Darice Shaw

Sandra H. White

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OF THE CITY OF DALLAS, TEXAS

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**RULE ONE
AUTHORITY AND HOURS**

1.1 AUTHORITY FOR RULES

Under the inherent power and duty of all Texas Courts as codified in Section 21.001 of the *Texas Government Code*, the following Local Rules of the Municipal Court of the City of Dallas (“Local Rules of Court”) are promulgated and shall apply and govern any and all proceedings held within any Municipal Court of the City of Dallas, County of Dallas, State of Texas.

1.2 APPLICATION: IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL HEARINGS

The Local Rules of Court apply to each attorney, to each Defendant representing himself/herself (“Pro Se Defendant”) in the Municipal Court of the City of Dallas, Texas, to all Court staff, as well as to any and all witnesses or observers who appear in the Municipal Court of the City of Dallas, Texas. Each judge may promulgate rules for his/her court which do not conflict with these rules and applicable law. Failure to comply with these Rules may result in the imposition of sanctions including contempt. The Local Rules of Court are effective 1/21/2025.

1.3 AVAILABILITY

A copy of these rules shall be available in the courtrooms, the courthouse information desks, public service counters and on the City of Dallas website.

1.4 CITATION FORM

These Local Rules shall be known as the Local Rules of the Municipal Court of the City of Dallas and each rule may be cited as “Dallas Local Rule” or “D.L.R.”

1.5 AUTHORITY OF MUNICIPAL JUDGES

The Municipal Court of the City of Dallas is one Court, separated into different courtrooms, each referred to as a “court.” Each Judge, whether a full time Judge or an Associate Judge sitting for a full time Judge, has all authority within the Court in which they are sitting and in the Dallas Municipal Court in general as does any Municipal Judge of a Court of Record in the State of Texas. Each Municipal Judge, whether full time or Associate, is also a Magistrate for every county into which that the City of Dallas goes and has all authority as a Magistrate in any of those counties as set forth in State law.

1.6 HOURS OF OPERATION

The hours of operation of the court shall be posted on the front doors at the:

Dallas Municipal Court, 2014 Main St, Dallas, TX 75201

The Judges' Office shall be open from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, except for City observed holidays or when the Court is otherwise closed by order of the Administrative Judge or the City Manager.

RULE TWO COURTROOM DECORUM

All persons, whether lawyers, parties, witnesses, jurors, or spectators, conducting business, participating in trials, or otherwise attending proceedings in a courtroom or before the court in person or through a virtual hearing, shall conduct themselves in a manner respectful of the court's authority and function so as to maintain the dignity, integrity, decorum, seriousness and professional atmosphere of the court and the administration of justice

2.1 PROMPTNESS

All parties shall be prompt in arriving for court and attending to court business.

2.3 DRESS CODE

Proper attire is required in the courtrooms. The following accessories and items of clothing are not permitted at the City of Dallas Municipal Court.

- A. Bare midriffs
- B. Head covering other than for religious or medical purposes
- C. Muscle shirts and tank tops
- D. Any item of clothing that displays offensive, vulgar, racist, sexist, gang-related, obscene language and/or graphics.

2.3 CONDUCT REQUIRED OF ALL PERSONS ATTENDING COURT

Court is in session whenever the Judge is on the Bench. **While the Court is in session, unless the Judge directs otherwise the following conduct must be observed:**

- A. **No smoking** or use of tobacco products, including snuff or chewing tobacco.
- B. **No propping feet** or sitting on tables, railings, or on the backs of benches or chairs.
- C. **No loud noises.**

- D. **No eating** of food, drinking of beverages, or chewing and/or popping of gum.
- E. **No standing** in the Courtroom, particularly in front of Bailiff or in front of the Bench, except when addressing the Court, or by direction of the Judge, or as necessitated by the business of the Court.
- F. **No gestures**, facial expressions, or sounds indicating approval or disapproval of a ruling by the Court or a comment of a witness.
- I. **No unattended children** in the Courtroom.
- J. **No person** other than the Judge who is presiding, a peace officer or a security guard employed by the City of Dallas and on duty who has a current appropriate license shall possess a weapon in the Courthouse.
- K. **No talking** during hearings or trials, except by participants.
- L. **Use of Cellular Phones, Portable Computers, Photographic, Recording or Other Electronic Equipment:**
1. All forms of audio-recording, video-recording and use of photographic applications are strictly prohibited except as specified herein.
 - a. In appropriate cases, for ceremonial, marriage, or educational purposes, an exception to the above rule may be allowed.
 - b. Audio-recording, video-recording and photographic devices may be permitted during a court proceeding only with prior approval from the Judge.
 2. **General Public Provision:** Cellular devices, laptop computers, tablet computers, and any other electronic recording devices or photographic equipment should not be used in the courtroom and should be turned off. Social Media shall not be accessed while in the courtrooms. Such usage is allowable in the public lobby areas. Broadcasting of Court proceedings is strictly prohibited.
 3. **Exceptions to This General Rule as Follows:**
 - a. Cellular devices, laptop computers, tablet computers, and any other electronic recording devices or photographic equipment, shall be placed on silent mode, but may be used by attorneys and defendants, in courtrooms under the following conditions:
 - Accessing proof of financial responsibility
 - Accessing case files

- Taking notes during hearings or trials
- Conducting research relevant to the case.

Usage shall not delay or disrupt court proceedings. This portion shall also apply to Juvenile Case Managers, Court staff and law enforcement personnel in their official capacity as officers of the Court.

b. Cellular devices, laptop computers, tablet computers, and any other electronic recording devices or photographic equipment may be used in courtrooms by news media personnel for the limited purpose of taking notes of court proceedings and shall not cause disruption. Use of such devices in the courtroom requires prior approval from the Court. The Judge shall notify Court staff of approval.

4. Violations may result in the confiscation of Cellular devices, laptop computers, tablet computers, and any other electronic recording devices or photographic equipment, and/or a finding of Contempt of Court.

RULE THREE NOTICE, APPEARANCE AND PLEAS

3.1 RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all persons with business before the court to determine the date, time and nature of each setting of the case(s) and to update or notify the court of any changes of address of the Defendant or of counsel for the Defendant.

3.2 NOTICE

Notice of the date, time and nature of each setting shall be given by the court to a pro se defendant and/or counsel for defendant in person or by electronic means (text messaging or email), and by USPS mail addressed to the last known address of a pro se defendant and/or counsel. A copy of each notice shall be marked as to the manner of its delivery and shall be properly filed and maintained within the Court's file by the Department of Court and Detention Services.

3.3 WALK-IN COURT DOCKET

Attorneys and pro se defendants may request to see a judge on the walk-in docket to handle cases not set on that particular day's docket and cases with active warrants. Attorneys and pro se defendants will be seen at the discretion of the judge presiding over the walk-in docket.

3.4 COMPLAINT

A copy of the Complaint shall be made available to the Defendant or counsel for the Defendant no later than 14 days before the pretrial hearing. A Complaint shall not be considered timely if this deadline is not met.

3.5 PLEA BY DEFENDANT

A plea of not guilty, guilty or no contest must be filed with the Clerk of the Court within twenty-one (21) days following the issuance of the citation. Payment in full of a case shall constitute a guilty/no contest plea. An in person timely plea of not guilty by a pro se defendant or counsel may result in a trial setting subject to the defendant waiving his/her right to file pretrial motions. A timely plea of not guilty made my mail, at the windows or online will result in a pre-trial setting. Failure to appear within twenty-one days may result in the issuance of an alias warrant.

3.6 REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

A party desiring the services of an interpreter should make the request as soon as possible, in writing in the case of a mail or online plea or in open court in case of an in-person plea. Accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made upon request.

RULE FOUR MOTIONS

4.1 FILING

All Motions shall be filed with the Clerk of the Court. Service of a Motion shall be made pursuant to law. Each Motion shall contain a certificate of service signed by the Movant indicating that a copy of such Motion has in fact been served on the opposing party and setting out the manner and date of service. For Motions with a current court setting, a courtesy copy of the Motion shall be provided to the Court at the time of filing.

4.2 PRE-TRIAL MOTIONS

Pre-Trial motions shall be filed at least 7 days prior to the pretrial date. If no pretrial date is set, pretrial motions shall be filed at least 7 days prior to the trial date. If a pretrial motion has not been ruled on before pretrial/trial date, such motion may be heard on the date of pretrial/trial. Each motion or response shall contain a certificate of service signed by the movant or respondent indicating that a copy of such motion or response has been served upon the opposing party, the manner of service and the date of service.

4.3 MOTIONS FOR CONTINUANCE

Motions for Continuance require good cause shown and will not be granted for delay purposes, but only to ensure that justice is done.

4.3.1 CODE

Continuances are governed by Chapter 29, *Texas Code of Criminal Procedure*.

4.3.2 FORM

- A. All Motions for Continuance shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Clerk of the Court at least five working days prior to the scheduled court date. Such Motions shall be filed immediately upon discovering the necessity for the continuance.
- B. Each Motion for Continuance shall contain:
 - 1) The cause number;
 - 2) The name of the Defendant;
 - 3) The date and time of the setting requested to be continued;
 - 4) The specific facts justifying the continuance;
 - 5) A certificate of service; and
 - 6) An oath attesting to the truth of the matters contained in the Motion.

4.3.3 EMERGENCY MOTIONS

Where the underlying facts which form the basis for a motion for continuance were not discovered and could not have been discovered through the exercise of due diligence, an emergency motion for continuance may be filed. Emergency Motions for Continuance may be filed at any time prior to the respective Court proceeding and will be ruled on by the Court at the call of the docket.

4.3.4 FACTORS

Except in cases where constitutional or statutory continuances are sought, the following factors will be considered in determining whether the motion shall be granted or denied:

- A. The specific nature of the conflict in scheduling;

- B. The age of the case;
- C. The number of continuances previously granted to each party; and
- D. The timeliness of the filing of the motion, including the date on which the scheduling conflict, if any, became known to movant, and
- E. Any other matter relevant to the motion.

4.3.5 FORUM

A motion for continuance shall be presented in the same Court where the case is set to be heard. In all cases the ruling on a motion for continuance shall be at the discretion of the Judge of the Court where the case is set to be heard.

4.3.6 DENIED MOTION

If a Defendant's Motion for Continuance is denied, in order for the Defendant to avoid a warrant, a bond in the amount set by the Court may be required to be posted, at the discretion of the Judge denying the Motion. It is the responsibility of the Defendant to determine whether the Motion was granted or denied and to determine whether a bond is required. If a State's Motion for Continuance is denied, the case will proceed to trial, plea, or other disposition.

4.4 MOTIONS TO WITHDRAW/SUBSTITUTE

Any attorney who makes an appearance on behalf of a Defendant or represents to the Court that he/she is the attorney of record for a party shall continue to be considered by the Court as the attorney of record for that Defendant until a Motion to Withdraw/Substitute as Counsel is filed by that attorney and is granted by the Court or the case is disposed of by trial, plea, deferred disposition or driver safety granted, dismissal or substitution of counsel. The attorney filing such motion shall acknowledge in the motion that s/he has notified the client of all future court settings.

4.4.1 WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT A HEARING

A Motion to Withdraw as Counsel for Defendant may be granted without a hearing only if the moving attorney obtains an agreement by the State and files a verified certificate stating the last known mailing address of the Defendant and files along with the Motion a written consent to the withdrawal signed by the client which consent acknowledges that the Defendant has been advised of all future court settings.

4.4.2 WITHDRAWAL WITH A HEARING

If all requirements of Rule 4.3.1 are not satisfied, a Motion to Withdraw must be presented to the Court at a hearing after notice to the Defendant and to all other parties.

4.4.3 SUBSTITUTION OF COUNSEL.

A motion to substitute counsel shall be signed by the attorney who currently represents the defendant as well as the attorney who wishes to undertake representation of the defendant. The motion must include an affirmative statement that the defendant has consented to the substitution. If a motion to withdraw as counsel for defendant also contains a motion to substitute counsel and a notice of appearance by another attorney, the attorney named in the motion to substitute will thereafter be considered by the court as attorney of record for the defendant.

RULE FIVE TRIAL SETTINGS

5.1 DOCKET ORDER

Subject to the discretion of the Judge calling the docket, the order of cases actually proceeding to trial (both trial by the Court and trial by jury) shall be as follows:

- A. Preferential settings
- B. Set according to age, oldest first.
- C. Other circumstances as determined by the Court in the interest of justice.

All cases not proceeding to trial and not otherwise disposed of on a particular day's docket will be noted as a court's reset unless a reset is requested by a party and granted by the court. Jury trials shall take precedence over trials by the Court.

5.2 PREFERENTIAL SETTING

To receive a preferential setting, subject to the Judge's approval, a party must meet one of the following criteria:

- A. Reside more than fifty (50) miles outside of the city limits of Dallas, Texas;
- B. Have a condition, illness, or injury that would necessitate an expedited disposition of the case; or

- C. Have an outside witness who has appeared on at least one prior trial setting without the case having been reached.

Nothing herein shall prevent a Judge from assigning a preferential setting on his/her own Motion in the interest of justice.

5.3 RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Upon written request of any party, prior to the commencement of a hearing or trial, court proceedings, limited to trial testimony and Motions before the court, shall be recorded.

5.4 CASE SETTINGS

A Defendant or defense counsel may request that the case be set for a trial. A trial before the Court will not take place unless the Defendant and a Defendant's counsel sign a form waiving the Defendant's right to a jury trial. Once a case is set in a particular Court, that case shall remain in such Court, unless the case is transferred to another Court by agreement of the respective Judges or by the Administrative Judge.

5.5 DEFENDANT ATTENDANCE

Every Defendant shall be present at the call of every trial docket, unless his/her attorney has filed and been granted a Motion for Continuance. Every pro se Defendant shall be present at the call of his/her trial docket, unless he/she has filed and been granted a Motion for Continuance. The Judge shall issue a Warrant for Failure to Appear for any Defendant who fails to appear without having been granted a continuance.

RULE SIX JUVENILE PROCEEDINGS AND MINORS

6.1 JUVENILE DEFINED

A juvenile is defined as someone who is at least 10 years of age and younger than 17 years of age on the date an offense is committed.

6.2 PARENT'S PRESENCE REQUIRED

A parent's presence is required for all juvenile court proceedings. A parent (includes a person standing in parental relation, a managing conservator, or a custodian) is required to be present with a juvenile at all court proceedings. This is true even if an attorney has been retained.

6.3 NOTICE OF CURRENT ADDRESS

The parent and child have a continuing obligation to give written notice of current address to the Court.

6.4 ALCOHOL BEVERAGE CODE

A minor (anyone under the age of 21 years) may only enter a plea of guilty or no contest to an Alcohol Beverage Code violation in open Court.

6.5 PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

Youth Diversion for Class C misdemeanors (non-traffic)

As of January 1, 2025, the municipal court has implemented a Youth Diversion Plan where a juvenile who receives a Class C misdemeanor (non-traffic) can be diverted before the case is filed for a period not to exceed 180 days. The diversion is in the best interest of the child and promotes long term safety in the community. The child and parent must consent to the diversion. The child may enter into diversion agreement every 365 days.

Juvenile defendants may also request to participate in the City of Dallas Teen Court proceedings.

RULE SEVEN ATTORNEY PRACTICE

7.1 LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

Attorneys must submit a written letter of representation /notice of appearance on each case they are appearing for a client defendant. Appearances should be filed with the clerk of the court.

7.2 ATTORNEY DOCKET

Attorneys may utilize the attorney walk-in docket to handle certain cases off-docket and resolve client cases.

7.3 ATTORNEY RESPONSIBILITY

Attorneys shall adhere to these rules when they practice before all courts both in person and virtually and shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. It is the responsibility of the attorney to timely notify clients of pending court dates, plea offers, court orders and deadlines. Attorneys shall ensure proper notice with the City of Dallas City Attorney's Office in accordance with Chapter 28 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure.

**RULE EIGHT
POST TRIAL PROCEEDINGS**

8.1 MOTION FOR NEW TRIAL AND APPEALS

All motions for new trials and appeals shall be filed with the clerk of the court either via mail or in person.

8.2 ADMONISHMENT

Pro se defendants are admonished, due to the inherent complexities of appellate law, to consider retaining counsel to represent them on appeal.

8.3 INABILITY TO PAY FINE

IF a defendant does not appeal the court's decision, but claims indigency, the defendant may request an indigency hearing. At that hearing the defendant shall be required to show cause why he/she cannot discharge the fine by making payments or performing community service hours in lieu of payment.

8.4 INDIGENCY UPON APPEAL

If a defendant is indigent and unable to pay either the appeal bond or to pay for the transcript, he/she may file an affidavit of indigency with the court and file a motion to waive costs on forms approved by the court. Such affidavit of indigence and/or motion to waive costs must be filed within the 10 days statutory period fo file an appeal bond. A hearing on the motion to waive costs shall then be scheduled by the judge who entered the order being appealed.

**RULE NINE
SEVERABILITY AND CONSTRUCTION**

9.1 SEVERABILITY

If any provision of these policies, rules and regulations as contained in the Local Rules of Court or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect other provisions or applications of these policies, rules and regulations which can be given effect without the invalid or unconstitutional provision or application, and to this end the provisions of these policies, rules and regulations are severable. In lieu thereof there shall be added a provision as similar in terms to such illegal, invalid, unconstitutional and unenforceable provision as may be possible and be legal, valid, constitutional and enforceable.

9.2 INAPPLICABILITY TO CIVIL CASES

The Local Rules set forth herein are the rules applicable to criminal proceedings, and are not applicable to the civil cases and administrative hearings heard in the City of Dallas Municipal Court with the exception of **Rule Two (Courtroom Decorum)**.

9.3 CONSTRUCTION

The Local Rules shall not be construed so as to enlarge, diminish, modify, or alter the jurisdiction, powers, or authority of the Municipal Court of the City of Dallas.