

Welcome to the 247th District Court
Court Policies and Procedures — Effective January 14, 2019

All parties are expected to follow the Harris County Local Rules and the [Family Trial Division Local Rules](#). The following additional policies and procedures apply to cases in this Court:

1. **Docket call** each day is at 9:30 a.m.
2. The court will hear **uncontested matters** daily beginning at 8:30 a.m. If you would like to prove up an uncontested matter at any other time, please contact the court coordinator to make sure that a judge will be available. Your case will be heard as an uncontested matter only if you have filed all documents listed as *Required Orders and Forms for Entry of Final Decree/Order*.
3. **Trials** are set on Mondays. After March 1, 2019, trials will be set every other Monday.
4. Hearings for **temporary orders** and **ancillary matters** (for example, withdrawals and substitutions of counsel) are set on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Temporary orders hearings may be limited to one hour per party. A motion for temporary orders in a modification case or additional temporary orders should be supported by an affidavit and will not be set for hearing without court approval.
5. **Enforcement hearings** are set on Wednesdays. For child support enforcement cases, please bring a payment history from the Texas State Disbursement Unit. If the moving party is requesting incarceration, the moving party should bring a proposed commitment order to the hearing. Commitment orders must be entered by 2:00 p.m. on the date of incarceration.
6. **CPS hearings** are set on Tuesdays, except for emergencies. This includes non-statutory hearings set by counsel.
7. **Entry of orders** may be set on any day. If you call to inform the Court that your order has been filed, please make sure that all documents listed as *Required Orders and Forms for Entry of Final Decree/Order* have also been filed.
8. **Motions for summary judgment** and **motions for reconsideration** will be heard by submission only, unless an oral hearing is requested by the Court. The submission docket is on Fridays at 1:30 p.m. To request a submission date, please contact the lead clerk.
9. **Discovery disputes**. The court expects counsel to make every effort possible to resolve discovery issues without court intervention. If court intervention is necessary, the moving party shall include a Certificate of Conference complying

with Local Rule 5.1. Hearings on discovery motions will be set on Fridays at 1:30 p.m. Courtesy paper copies of the discovery requests and responses at issue should be provided to the Court at the hearing.

10. **Mediation is required before all temporary orders hearings.** Failure to mediate may not be used as an excuse to avoid a temporary orders hearing.
11. **Mediation is required before final trial.** Exceptions may be made in certain cases. Parties seeking an exception must file a motion and set a hearing on the issue at least 10 days before trial. Failure to mediate before trial may result in dismissal of the case.
12. If a child is the subject of a suit, all court filings should identify the child by his or her **full name. Do not use initials.**
13. A **statement on health insurance availability** for a child should be included in a party's initial pleading.
14. **Name changes for children.** The child's birth certificate must be provided before a final hearing on a name change for the child.
15. The court requires a **sworn inventory** to be on file at or before the prove-up of a default divorce.
16. A **pre-trial conference** is required for all **jury trials** and will generally be scheduled 10 days before trial. Before the pre-trial conference, the attorneys should file a completed *Pre-trial Conference Checklist for Jury Trials*.
17. Before a final hearing on an **adoption**, an *Adoption Pre-trial Checklist* must be completed and emailed to the court coordinator. The court will confirm that the necessary documents have been filed and will contact the parties to schedule the final adoption hearing.
18. **Late calls.** Attorneys who will be late for docket call should call the clerk and state their expected time of arrival, reason for delay, and any other court(s) where they are appearing. A hearing may be passed or reset if the attorney for the moving party does not arrive in the courtroom within thirty minutes of docket call.
19. **Certificates of conference.** The Court requires serious and timely compliance with Local Rule 5.1. Failure to comply will result in your hearing being passed.
20. **Ex parte temporary restraining orders** should be joint and mutual, although exceptions may be made if supported by affidavit. In SAPCRs, the court will strike certain proposed injunctions (such as alcohol or paramour injunctions) if not supported by an affidavit.

21. The court may appoint an ***amicus attorney*** in a case in which conservatorship or possession of or access to a child is in dispute.
22. ***Cell phones and other electronic devices*** should be in silent mode or turned off in the courtroom. No photos or videos are allowed, except in adoption cases. No food may be brought into the courtroom. No gum chewing please. While in trial, parties and attorneys may have water or beverages at the counsel table.
23. ***Children may not be brought into the courtroom*** without the prior consent of the court. A child being adopted will be invited into the courtroom at the appropriate time. If the court approves a request for a judge to interview a child in chambers, the child should be brought to the court's front office at the time set by the court for the interview.
24. At final trial on divorce matters, parties must bring their ***proposed property division*** to trial in Excel or Google Sheets format on a USB drive.