

SAN PATRICIO COUNTY COURT AT LAW
INFECTIOUS DISEASE PROTOCOL

1. **STATEMENT AND POLICY**

In response to the threat of the Coronavirus and other infectious diseases, this Court hereby implements this Infectious Disease Protocol to minimize the risk of community transmission of COVID-19. This Protocol covers persons with scheduled hearings, appearances, or trials in the San Patricio County Court at Law who have reason to believe that they, their attorney, client, or necessary witness have been **exposed to COVID-19** or are **experiencing the flu-like symptoms** (hereafter referred to as a “*Covered Person*”).

POLICY: No person who has been exposed to COVID-19 or is experiencing flu-like symptoms may personally appear in court while this protocol is in force without prior express permission of the Court. It is the sole and exclusive obligation of each attorney or self-represented litigant to comply with this protocol.

2. **CIVIL CASES**

A *Covered Person* in a *civil hearing* may appear by video conference or telephonically if the Court has the availability. Video conference will be through the Lifesize video conference system currently in the Court at Law Courtroom. Video conference or telephonic testimony in a bench trial requires agreement of counsel. No video conference or telephonic testimony will be permitted in jury trials except as authorized by statute. For telephonic testimony, a notary public must be physically present with the witness to identify the witness by proper and legal ID and administer the oath to the witness on the record. *Covered Persons* not properly sworn in this manner will not be permitted to testify.

3. **CRIMINAL CASES**

Defendants in criminal cases must appear in person as summoned for each setting unless their appearance has been waived by signed order of the Court. Approved forms for waivers of appearance, arraignment, and Pre-Trial hearings may be obtained via e-mail from the Court Coordinators or at sanpatricioccal@gmail.com. Any *Covered Person* who is a defendant in a criminal case must contact their attorney *prior* to their court date in order to request to be excused from court.

4. **CONTINUANCES AND ALTERNATIVES TO ORAL HEARINGS**

All requests for continuance under this protocol must include a certificate of conference stating the agreement or opposition of opposing counsel. The motion must state that it is asserted pursuant to the Infectious Disease Protocol, identify the Covered Person or Persons, and describe why they are necessary for the hearing in question.

If no contested issue needs to be considered by the Court, Rule 11 Agreements should be utilized.

5. **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Questions and requests for waiver forms should be directed to: sanpatricioccal@gmail.com

Signed and Effective on March 13, 2020

Elizabeth Welborn,
Judge Presiding