

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VIRTUAL COURT PROCEEDINGS

Due to the Pandemic of COVID-19 and to protect the public health and safety, Helotes Municipal Court is engaging in social distancing by conducting hearings via telephonic conferencing or videoconferencing. Below is information about the Rules of the Court during the hearing and how to connect with the court to participate in a telephonic or a videoconference hearing.

All hearings will be conducted by ZOOM. **You must have a webcam/built in camera with sound and video on your device for E-Court to be an option for you.** You will be required to install the ZOOM APP on your wireless device before the conference begins if you do not already have the app.

1. ATTENDING BY PHONE:

- If you attend the hearing by phone your court hearing will be audio only.
- You must call or e-mail the clerk 1 week before your hearing to give them your phone number and/or e-mail address
- The court will contact you at least one (1) day before the hearing to give you the meeting ID.
- On the date of the hearing you must call the number corresponding to your area at least fifteen (15) minutes before your hearing starts:

Dial by your location

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

- When you call you will be prompted to enter the Meeting ID that was given to you by email
- After you enter the Meeting ID press the # key
- You will not be given passcode number, if asked for a passcode number, instead press the # key
- Your phone will stay connected, it will be quiet as you are on the line
- The hearing will begin when the Judge starts the hearing
- Please have your phone on mute until the Judge speaks to you on the line

If you have trouble with the steps, please call (210) 695-5903 or you may contact ZOOM support at: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362003>

Notice of Alternatives to Full Payment of Fines and Court Costs

If you are convicted of an offense and are unable to pay the fine and court costs, bring this to the attention of the Judge and you may have the court assess your ability to pay and the court may provide alternatives to full payment in satisfying the judgment.

2. ATTENDING BY VIDEO ON YOUR COMPUTER OR SMARTPHONE

- You must have a camera and speakers on your computer or phone to attend the hearing by video
- **You must contact the court at least one (1) day before your hearing and provide or confirm your e-mail address**
- The court will send you an e-mail to confirm the hearing. The e-mail will have a link to join the hearing.
- Make sure to check your e-mail (and your junk mailbox) to make sure you have received the e-mail from the Helotes Municipal Court. If you did not receive the e-mail, call or e-mail the Helotes Municipal Court at **(210) 695-5903** or helotescourt81@gmail.com.
- On the date of the hearing you will click on the link to join the hearing.
- On the date of the hearing, you must join the hearing fifteen (15) minutes before the hearing is scheduled to begin.
- Fifteen (15) minutes before the hearing, open your e-mail and click on the green rectangle that says, "join meeting."
- Once you click on "join meeting" you will need to install the WebEx plugin. Press install.
- You will be asked to enter your name and your e-mail. Type in your legal name when you are asked and enter your e-mail address.
- Your meeting will not begin until the "host" (Judge) starts the meeting.

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3. MUTING THE MICROPHONE

All persons attending the hearing/docket except the Judge and the person testifying/speaking **SHALL** have their microphone on mute. The only time it is appropriate to unmute your microphone is when you will be testifying or speaking to the court.

4. CHECK IN

You must begin the teleconference or videoconference process by phone or video at least 10 minutes before your scheduled hearing. Your information will be verified such as: driver's license and date of birth.

5. VIRTUAL COURTROOM

When each person joins the video/audio conference, the person will appear in a virtual courtroom. The video will automatically be on and your microphone will remain muted until your case is called. There may be more than one person on the docket at the same time.

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When the case is called by the Judge your microphone will be unmuted. After speaking with the Judge, you will be excused from the virtual courtroom.

6. **USE OF FULL LEGAL NAMES**

At all times during the court proceeding you must use your LEGAL name including when joining the ZOOM meeting and/or a video conference call. An attorney representing a party, shall identify both themselves and their client by his or her full legal name.

7. **INTERPRETER (*INTERPRETER*)**

A defendant or attorney representing a defendant shall contact the court clerk at **(210) 695-5903** or by e mail at helotescourt81@gmail.com as soon as possible but not less than 48 hours **before** the court proceeding is scheduled if an interpreter is needed.

El acusado o abogado que representa el acusado debe de contactar a la ofecina de la corte al **(210) 695-5903** o contactar la corte por correo electrónico al helotescourt81@gmail.com tan pronto como sea posible pero no menos de 48 horas **antes** del horario del procedimiento judicial si un intérprete es necesario

8. **DRESS CODE AND LOCATION**

The remote proceedings are official court proceedings. All defendants and attorneys shall wear clothes appropriate for court while attending the virtual hearing.

9. **COURT PROCEEDING**

Helotes Municipal Court would like to remind you that this is a court proceeding. Inappropriate language will not be tolerated. If inappropriate language is used, you may be expelled from the hearing. If expelled, you will have to contact Helotes Municipal Court to reschedule your hearing for another date.

10. **SUBMISSION OF EXHIBITS BY FILING**

To request that a document be considered as evidence, all documents shall be filed with the clerk and copies provided to all parties not later than 2 days before the court hearing. Documents filed with the clerk does not automatically mean that the documents are admitted into evidence. Documents will be admitted into evidence in accordance with the rules of the criminal/civil procedure, as applicable.

11. **FORMAT OF THE EXHIBITS**

Any party wanting to request that documents or other items be admitted into evidence, must file the documents and they must be pre-marked and chronologically numbered for the case. Each document that you would like to ask to be admitted into evidence must be marked in the lower righthand corner. Each separate item requesting to be admitted into evidence must have its exhibit number (X-1, X-2, X-3 etc.). If there are more than one page per exhibit, please bound those pages together or mark it as; X-1 of 3, X-2 of 3, and X- 3 of 3 etc.

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You may drop the exhibits at the Helotes Municipal Court or mail the documents to the Helotes Municipal Court at: **12951 Bandera Road, Helotes, TX 78023**. Attach a cover sheet to the exhibits with your name, case (citation) number, drivers license/ID# and date of birth.

In compliance with the Open Courts provision of the Texas Constitution you are informed of the following:

12. OPEN COURTS PROVISIONS

The Office of Court Administration is providing Judges the ability to stream and host court proceedings via videoconferencing, via YouTube. Under the Open Courts provision of the Texas Constitution, all courts are required to maintain public access. In general, court proceedings, are presumptively open to the public in Texas State Courts. This YouTube Channel is in place to comply with that provision, however **recording of these proceedings is strictly prohibited. Participants and viewers are hereby admonished that violators are subject to the Court's contempt powers.** The punishment for contempt of a court is a fine of not more than \$100.00 or confinement in the county jail for not more than three (3) days, or both such fine and confinement in jail. Tex. Govt. Code, Sec. 21.002.

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