

**1 HARRIS COUNTY**  
**COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL**  
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**COUNTY COURTS  
AT LAW — CIVIL**

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# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-1 COURT DIRECTORY

<b>No. 1</b>	<b>George Barnstone</b> .....	<b>713-368-6610</b>
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline, Suite 740	
	Houston, Texas 77002	
	Trial Coordinator: Melissa Hammond.....	832-927-1711
	Bailiff: Kenneth Henderson.....	832-927-1701
	Court Reporter: Lettie Witter.....	832-927-1713
	Clerk: Kelli Ramirez.....	713-274-1345
	Clerk: Kayla Meyers.....	713-274-1345
<b>No. 2</b>	<b>Jim F. Kovach</b> .....	<b>832-927-1702</b>
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline, Suite 740	
	Houston, Texas 77002-1900	
	Clerk: Janice Gonzales.....	713-274-1349
	Clerk: Maria De La Rosa.....	713-274-1349
	Trial Coordinator: Grace Cantada.....	832-927-1722
	Bailiff: Anthony Hemmitt.....	832-927-1724
	Court Reporter: Kevin Bruzewski.....	832-927-1723
<b>No. 3</b>	<b>LaShawn A. Williams</b> .....	<b>713-274-1353</b>
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline, Suite 740	
	Houston, Texas 77002-1900	
	Clerk: Kimberly Rojas.....	713-274-1353
	Clerk: Elizabeth Lopez.....	713-274-1353
	Trial Coordinator: Vanessa Richardson.....	832-927-1732
	Bailiff: Edmundo Ojeda.....	832-927-1734
	Court Reporter: Laura Cutherell.....	832-927-1733
<b>No. 4</b>	<b>William “Bill” McLeod</b> .....	<b>713-368-6680</b>
	Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor	
	201 Caroline, Suite 740	
	Houston, Texas 77002-1900	
	Clerk: Tonya Garza.....	713-274-1358
	Clerk: Ashley Shapiro.....	713-274-1358
	Trial Coordinator: Kirina McNamara.....	832-927-1742
	Bailiff: Valerie Jenkins.....	832-927-1744
	Court Reporter: Alex McDaniel.....	832-927-1743

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-2 Local Rules

(Current as of April 2019)

### RULE 1. OBJECTIVE

**Purpose of Rules.** The objective of the rules of the county civil courts at law of Harris County is to obtain a just, fair, equitable and impartial adjudication of the rights of litigants under established principles of substantive law and established rules of procedural law. To the end that this objective may be attained with greatest dispatch and, as may be practicable, with the least expense to litigants and the county, these rules shall be applied to ensure that, so far as reasonably possible, all matters are brought to trial or final disposition in conformity with this objective.

### RULE 2. REPORTS

**Reports to the Harris County Judge.** The county clerk shall supply to all Harris County Civil Court at Law Judges, on a monthly basis, information concerning the number of filings, dispositions, trials and other judicial activities in each county civil court at law.

### RULE 3. FLOW OF CASES

**3.1.1 Filing and Assignment.** Upon being filed, a case in the county civil courts at law shall be assigned randomly to the docket of one of the courts. Once assigned to a court, a case will remain on the docket of that court for all purposes unless transferred as provided in Rule 3.2.

#### 3.2 Transfer

**3.2.1 Prior Judgment.** Any claim for relief based upon a prior judgment shall be assigned to the court of original judgment.

**3.2.2 Nonsuit.** If a case is filed in which there is a substantial identity of parties and causes of action as in a nonsuited case, the latter case shall be assigned to the court where the prior case was pending.

**3.2.3 Consolidation.** A motion to consolidate cases shall be heard in the court where the lowest numbered case is pending. If the motion is granted, the consolidated case will be given the number of the lowest number case and assigned to that court.

**3.2.4 Severance.** If a severance is granted, the new case will be assigned to the court where the original case pends, bearing the same file date and the same number as the original case with a numeric suffix designation; provided, however, that when a severed case has previously been consolidated from another court, the case shall upon severance be assigned to the court from which it was consolidated.

**3.2.5 Agreement.** Any case may be transferred from court to another court by written order of the Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law division or by written order

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-2 Local Rules

(Current as of April 2019)

of the judge of the court from which the case is transferred; provided, however, that in the latter instance the transfer must be with the written consent of the court to which the case is transferred.

**3.2.6 Presiding for Another.** In cases where a court presides for another court, the case shall remain pending in the original court, except as follows: 1) in any hearing on a motion for contempt, the judge who issued the order which is claimed to have been disobeyed must preside over the motion for contempt, except as otherwise provided in Sec. 21.002, Tex. Gov. Code. and 2) in any hearing on a temporary restraining order, temporary injunction or writs of mandamus and certiorari, the judge who issues the order thereby consents pursuant to 3.2.5 for the case to be transferred from the original court.

**3.2.7 Improper Court.** If a case is on the docket of a county civil court at law by any manner other than as prescribed by these rules, the Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law or Administrative Judge of Harris County shall transfer the case to the proper court.

### 3.3 Motions

**3.3.1 Form.** Motions shall be in writing and shall be accompanied by a proposed order granting the relief sought. The proposed order shall be a separate instrument, unless the entire motion, order, signature lines and certificate of service are all on one page.

**3.3.2 Submission.** In the discretion of the court, motions shall state a date of submission which shall be at least 10 days from filing, except on leave of court. The motion will be submitted to the court for filing on that date or later.

**3.3.3 Response.** Responses shall be in writing, and shall be filed at least three (3) working days before the date of submission, except on leave of court. Failure to file a response may be considered a representation of no opposition.

**3.3.4 Oral argument.** If a party views it as necessary, a request for oral argument must accompany the motion or response. The court may grant that request or order oral argument on its own motion. A request for an oral argument is not a response under Rule 3.3.3.

### 3.4 Trials

**3.4.1 Manner of Setting.** Cases shall be set for by order of the court.

**3.4.2 Date of Setting.** Cases shall be set for trial for a date certain. If a case is not assigned to trial by the Friday after the date it was set, whether because of a continuance or because it was not reached, the court shall reset the case to a date certain. Unless all parties agree otherwise, the new setting must comply with all requisites of T.R.C.P. 245.

**3.4.3 Preference for ADR.** In the discretion of the court, preference in setting cases for trial shall be given to matters in which the parties have participated in alternate dispute resolution procedures.

**3.4.4 Assignment to Trial.** A case is assigned to trial when counsel is called to the court to commence the jury or non-jury on the merits. For purposes of engaged counsel, no court may have more than one case assigned to trial at any one time.

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-2 Local Rules

(Current as of April 2019)

**3.4.5 Dead Weeks.** Except with the consent of all parties, no cases will be assigned to trial on the merits during:

- 1) The week of the Second Administrative Judicial Conference (February or March);
- 2) The week of the State Bar Convention (June);
- 3) The week of the Conference of the Judicial Section (September); and
- 4) The last week of December.

### 3.6 Dismissal Dockets.

The following cases are eligible for dismissal for want of prosecution pursuant to T.R.C.P. 165a:

- 1) Cases on file for more than 180 days in which no answer has been filed or is required by law;
- 2) Cases which have been on file for more than eighteen months and are not set for trial;
- 3) Cases in which a party or his attorney has failed to take any action specified by the court.

### 3.7 Repealed.

### 3.8 Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law.

**3.8.1** The Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law shall be elected for a term on one calendar year by the judges of the county civil courts at law in the regular December meeting of the judges of the county civil courts at law.

**3.8.2** The Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law may by written order designate any other judge of the division to act in his/her place if he/she is absent or unable to act. The judge so designated shall have all the duties and authority granted by these Rules to the Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law during the period of the designation.

## RULE 7. CONFLICTING ENGAGEMENTS

**7.1 Inter-County.** The rules of the Second Administrative Judicial Region control conflicts in settings of all cases between a Harris County court and a court not in Harris County.

**7.2 Intra-County.** Among the trial courts sitting in Harris County:

- 1. Trial/Trial.** A trial setting that is assigned takes precedence over a conflicting trial setting not yet assigned.
- 2. Trial/Non-Trial.** Trial settings take precedence over conflicting non-trial settings except as provided herein;
- 3. Non-Trial/Pre-Trial.** The matter which was first filed, regardless of cause number, shall take precedence over non-trial settings, non-court ordered alternate dispute resolution and non-court ordered depositions.

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-2 Local Rules

(Current as of April 2019)

**7.3 Waiver.** The court with precedence may yield.

**7.4 Lead Counsel.** This rule operates only where lead counsel, as defined by T.R.C.P. 8, is affected, unless the court expands coverage to other counsel.

**7.5 Reporting of Conflicting Engagements.** It is the duty of counsel to report promptly to a court immediately upon learning of a conflicting engagement that might preclude that counsel's availability for trial.

### RULE 8. VACATIONS OF COUNSEL

**8.1** The County Civil Courts will honor the written designations for Summer vacation weeks and/or non-Summer vacation weeks filed with the district clerk pursuant to the Local Rules of the Civil Trial Division of the Judicial District Courts of Harris County, except for cases preferentially set for trial prior to the vacation designation. An attorney may designate not more than four weeks of vacation during a calendar year as vacation, during which that attorney will not be assigned to trial or required to engage in any pretrial proceedings. This rule operates only where lead counsel, as defined by T.R.C.P. 8, is affected, unless the trial court expands coverage to other counsel.

**8.2 Summer vacations.** Summer vacation weeks so designated will protect the attorney from trials during those summer weeks, even if an order setting the case for trial was signed before the vacation designation was filed, except in cases preferentially set for trial prior to the vacation designation.

**8.3 Non-summer vacations.** Non-summer vacation weeks may not run consecutively for more than two weeks at a time. Non-summer vacation weeks so designated will not protect an attorney from a trial by an order signed before the date the designation is filed.

### RULE 10. MEETINGS

The judges of the County Civil Courts at Law shall meet regularly each month at such times and places as the Administrative Judge of the County Civil Courts at Law may direct by a written notice distributed at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting, except in the case of an emergency.

### RULE 15. EFFECTIVE DATE AND AMENDMENTS

**15.1 Effective Date.** These rules shall become effective on April 29, 1998.

**15.2 Cross-Reference.** Any reference in these rules to a statute or a court rule shall also apply to any successor statute or court rule, whether by recodification, revision or amendment.

**15.3 Applicability.** The foregoing rules are applicable to both jury and non-jury cases.

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:1 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Jim F. Kovach

COUNTY COURTS  
AT LAW — CIVIL

**COURT:**

County Civil Court at Law No. 2

**JUDGE'S NAME:**

Jim F. Kovach



**COURT ADDRESS:**

Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor  
201 Caroline Street  
Houston, Texas 77002

**STAFF:**

Clerk: Janice Gonzales .....	713-274-1349
Clerk: Maria De La Rosa .....	713-274-1349
Court Coordinator: Grace Cantada.....	832-927-1722
Bailiff: Anthony Hemmitt.....	832-927-1724
Court Reporter: Kevin Bruzewski.....	832-927-1723

**JUDGE'S PROFILE:**

**Date Licensed:**

11/01/1991

**Year Elected/Appointed:**

November 2018

**Previous legal experience/area of practice before becoming a judge and with whom:**

	YEAR
Kovach Law Firm, PLLC	2015-2018
McElvaney & Kovach, LLP	2012-2015
Dillard, McElvaney & Kovach, LLP	1994-2012
My prior law practice consistently primarily of commercial collection cases.	

**1. Can the court be contacted by e-mail or fax? If so, what is the number or address? Does the court accept filings by fax or e-mail?**

- The court's Trial Coordinator may be contacted regarding scheduling and/or trial setting inquiries. She can be reached by email at Grace\_Cantada@ccl.hctx.net.
- The main number for the court is 832-927-1702.
- The court's address is 201 Caroline Street, 5th floor, Houston Texas 77002.
- The court clerks do not accept filing via e-mail or fax. All documents must be e-filed.

**2. What is your preferred procedure for contacting the court in a true emergency?**

- Contact the clerks at 713-274-1349.

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:1 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Jim F. Kovach

### PRE-TRIAL

#### 3. What are the court's procedures for level 3 cases controlled by Rule 190.4?

If the parties want a Joint Docket Control Order, they should contact the trial coordinator to get an agreed upon trial date and then submit the Joint Docket Control Order to the Court. If opposing counsel does not agree to the dates, a hearing may be set to ask the Court to enter an Order.

#### 4. Do you have any particular rules governing motions and orders?

- Motions must include proposed order when set for hearing or submission.
- When Motions are filed a separate notice of hearing or notice of submission should also be filed.
- Motions must include certificate of service and certificate of conference.

#### 5. When should proposed orders be submitted with the court?

A proposed order must be filed along with motion when set for a hearing or on the submission docket.

##### a. Discovery motions:

Set hearing orally or by submission. Please be sure to include Certificate of Conference.

##### b. Motions for Summary Judgment:

Set on submission docket, but oral hearing may be requested. Please provide the required 21-days' notice to the clerk. If oral hearing is requested, request must be made in writing and must be filed on or before the date of submission. Requests for Oral Hearing will generally be granted by the court.

##### c. Motions to dismiss/nonsuit (D.W.O.P.):

- Dismissal/nonsuit will be processed as soon as received by clerks.
- A Motion to Nonsuit does not dispose of a Counter-claim or other affirmative claim for relief such as a Motion for Sanctions.

##### d. Other motions (special exceptions, sanctions, severance/consolidation, default judgment, etc.):

Agreed and/or unopposed motions may be submitted directly to the judge without the necessity of an oral hearing unless requested by the court.

#### 6. When and how should motions be set for submission/oral hearing? (i.e., set on a particular date or time, amount of notice to opposing parties for oral hearing other than summary judgments, etc.)? Do you automatically allow oral hearings if requested?

- The Court handles cases on the Submission docket every Friday @ 8:30 a.m. with 5 business days' notice to the clerk and to the opposing party.
- Oral hearings are held on any Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday at 9:15 am with 5 business days' notice to the clerk and to the opposing party.
- Movants are free to pick their hearing date and file notice of hearing to the clerk to be put on the docket.

#### 7. What is your preferred procedure for contacting the court or court staff regarding the status of motions? What procedures should be followed to obtain an expedited hearing?

- Contact the clerks at 713-274-1349.



# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:1 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Jim F. Kovach

- Request for expedited hearing will be put on the next available docket; any special request must be directed to the Court Coordinator and will be granted at the court's discretion. Contact Court Coordinator at 832-927-1722 or by email at Grace\_Cantada@ccl.hctx.net.

### 8. What requirements do you have concerning the dismissal docket and motions to retain?

- Failure to perfect service within 180 days of the filing of a lawsuit subjects the case to dismissal for want of prosecution, in accordance with TRCP 165(a).
- The court will set these cases on the status/DWOP docket.
- Motions to retain may be filed 10 days prior to the setting and may be granted at the court's discretion.

### 9. What are your procedures and requirements for court appointments of ad litem? What criteria do you use in choosing a guardian ad litem and granting guardian ad litem fees?

- Ad Litem need to submit resume to the court and will be put on a rotating list once approved by the court.
- Ad Litem fees must be reasonable for the type of case.

### 10. Do you prefer copies of cases attached to briefs/motions? If so, do you prefer pertinent provisions of the cases to be highlighted?

Yes. The court prefers them as Exhibits to Motions.

### 11. Is notice of rulings given by the court in writing? By telephone? Or party inquiry only?

- If a ruling is made, an order will be signed. The clerks will generate notices on any nonsuits/dismissals, sanctions and/or judgments.
- An imaged copy of order(s) signed by the court may be retrieved by visiting County Clerk Diane Trautman's website at: [https://www.cclerk.hctx.net/Applications/WebSearch/CourtSearch\\_R.aspx?ID=Jn3R+MBB1RMdelrCJT11sal3plCQycDSOj+GbeanJu%2fzUgyD52vKhsbv35yWTvM](https://www.cclerk.hctx.net/Applications/WebSearch/CourtSearch_R.aspx?ID=Jn3R+MBB1RMdelrCJT11sal3plCQycDSOj+GbeanJu%2fzUgyD52vKhsbv35yWTvM).

### 12. Do you allow telephone conferences for the resolution of motions or any other matters? If so, who arranges them and when are they scheduled?

The court allows telephone conferences for attorneys that are from out-of-town that are set on the motions docket. The requesting attorney must file written request to the clerk with contact information so the clerk can call at time of hearing.

## ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

### 13. What are your procedures for referring cases to alternative dispute resolution? Under what circumstances do you order mediation, when is it ordered, and how is the mediator chosen?

- All cases set on the jury docket will be referred to mediation.
- The court maintains a list of mediators that are approved by the court and will be appointed on rotating basis. The Court strongly encourages half-day mediations prior to all trials. If the parties agree on a mediator the Court is happy to substitute your agreed mediator for the assigned mediator.



# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:1 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Jim F. Kovach

**14. What is your preference regarding mediation or other ADR prior to trial or to get a trial setting? If an objection to ADR is required, when should it be filed?**

Mediation must be completed within one week before trial; objection to ADR/mediation may be set for a hearing after 14 days from the date of the order.

### TRIAL

**15. What is your procedure for setting a trial? How are cases that are not reached reset?**

- All new cases jury or non-jury are given a trial date 6 to 8 months out; all non-jury cases are tried the day they are set with the exception of cases needing 30 minutes or more. There are no docket positions for non-jury cases; they are heard according to the length of trial estimated by the parties.
- Jury cases are set every 1st or 3rd Monday of each month; 2-week docket.

**16. Do you give preferential trial settings, and, if so, under what circumstances?**

Yes. The Court will set cases preferentially if there are out-of-state witnesses or could take longer than 2 days.

**17. Do you have any particular rules governing pre-trial orders (e.g. witness lists, draft jury charges, etc.)? Is a form available? When is it presented?**

Parties need to exchange pretrial documents prior to their scheduled pretrial conference. The court requires the following pretrial documents: exhibit list, witness list, motion in limine, and jury charge using the court's template in Word format.

**18. What is your procedure for notifying parties of assignment to trial?**

- Non-jury cases are set 6 to 8 months out. Plaintiff to notify defendant and all parties per Rule 21a.
- Jury cases are set every 1st and 3rd Monday of each month for a 2-week docket and are subject to docket call on the Wednesday prior to trial setting. The court will call the parties starting from the oldest case to assign a specific day during the 2-week period. Cases not reached during docket call will be automatically reset to the next available trial setting.

**19. When should Motions in Limine be filed?**

Prior to scheduled pretrial conference.

**20. What is your procedure regarding challenges to experts (e.g. qualifications, Robinson, etc.)**

The court prefers Robinson/Daubert motions to be set and heard 30 days prior to trial.

**21. What are your procedures for jury voir dire (time periods per side, procedures for striking jurors)?**

- Each party will be given 20-30 minutes to do voir dire.
- Each party will be given 10-15 minutes to do strikes.
- Juries in County Civil Courts at Law are 6 person juries. Each party has 3 strikes. We typically get a panel of 18 prospective jurors. If you believe more than 6 jurors may be stricken for cause, please let us know and we will increase the panel request.



# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:1 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Jim F. Kovach

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### 22. When and in what form do you want proposed jury questions and/or findings of facts and conclusions of law presented (e.g. prior to trial, first day of trial, etc.)?

- Proposed jury question or jury charge should be submitted to the court prior to scheduled pretrial conference. Please submit in Word format.
- Finding of Facts and Conclusions of Law may be filed after trial upon request; a proposed order is required.

### 23. What is your procedure for continuing trials? How early will you grant/deny a request and how early do you want the request made?

- 1st request is free – 90 days out
  - 2nd request – if agreed will be granted without a hearing - 60 days out
  - 3rd request – if agreed will be granted without a hearing - 30 days out
- Continuances must include certificate of service and certificate of conference. The court may require parties to set hearing on any request for continuance on cases over a year old.

## GENERAL

### 24. Does the court provide its own blackboard? Chart stand? Overhead projector? Video equipment? What arrangements must be made to use them?

All courtrooms have state-of-the-art audio/video equipment, including an elmo (document camera), computer inputs, projectors, TV screens, and VCR and DVD players. Attorneys are encouraged to use the elmo to present exhibits to the jury. If you are unfamiliar with its use, arrange with the bailiff to come to the courtroom early and learn. You may also see detailed instructions on use of audio/visual equipment: <http://www.justex.net/Courts/Civil/CivilTechnology.aspx>.

### 25. Do you have any special rules governing courtroom decorum (e.g., addressing the court, opposing counsel or witnesses, requirement that counsel use only podium, approach the witness, talking or passing notes at the counsel table, beverages at the counsel table, attire)?

- Attorneys and all parties are expected to follow proper courtroom decorum by dressing up in business attire; stand up when addressing the court; ask the judge prior to approaching the bench; minimize talking or talk outside using the attorney ready rooms; turn off cell phones; water is allowed on counsel table. The court does not provide water or any beverages.
- Please refer to opposing counsel as Mr., Mrs. or Ms. and avoid calling each other by your first names in front of the jury.

### 26. When, if ever, do you want a court (courtesy) copy of a pleading?

Courtesy copy of pleadings may be submitted to clerks if filed a day prior to the hearing. The clerks will only accept courtesy copy of e-filed documents.

### 27. Are there special practices or procedures lawyers appearing before you should know about?

Be prepared. The Court tries to review and read every file prior to hearing, so be prepared. If you want a Transcript please fill out a Transcript Report Request prior to your hearing so the Court Reporter will know to go on the record.

### 28. Any pet peeves? What are they?

- Unpreparedness; last minute filings; no proposed order; side bars.

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:1 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Jim F. Kovach

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- Be courteous.
- Be punctual.

**29. Any special suggestions, admonitions or recommendations you would make to lawyers appearing before you?**

- Be prepared.
- Be courteous to staff and opposing counsel.
- Speak up and have your witness speak clearly so that the Court Reporter can hear you.

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:2 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 3

Hon. LaShawn A. Williams

COUNTY COURTS  
AT LAW — CIVIL

### **COURT:**

Harris County Civil Court at Law #3

### **JUDGE'S NAME:**

Judge LaShawn A. Williams

### **COURT ADDRESS:**

Harris County Civil Court House, 5th Floor  
201 Caroline Street  
Houston, TX 77002

### **STAFF:**

Clerk: Kimberly Rojas ..... 713-274-1353  
Clerk: Elizabeth Lopez..... 713-274-1353  
Court Coordinator: Vanessa Richardson ..... 832-927-1732  
Bailiff: Edmundo Ojeda..... 832-927-1734  
Court Reporter: Laura Cutherell..... 832-927-1733

### **COURT PROCEDURES:**

## ORAL HEARING AND SUBMISSION DOCKET

**ORAL HEARINGS** – All motions can be set for oral hearing on Mondays, or Wednesdays, at 9:00 a.m. Attorneys or parties will only be allowed to appear by telephone upon receiving special permission from the Court in advance of the hearing. All motions should include a proposed order.

All notices of hearing must be filed with the clerk's office at least five (5) business days prior to your hearing date. A motion must be filed in order to set a hearing on the oral hearing docket.

**SUMMARY JUDGMENTS** – Submission docket is held every Thursday at 9:30 a.m. with a 21 day notice. A request for oral hearing can be submitted and will be ruled on when the case is set for submission. You will be contacted by the court if the request for oral hearing is granted. Alternatively, you may request an oral hearing for Summary Judgments.

**SUBMISSION DOCKET** – Motions can be set for submission docket held every Thursday (except for holidays) at 9:30 a.m. with a **ten** (10) business day written notice. All motions should include a proposed order. You **MUST** also file proof of service of the Notice of Submission sent to the other party via RRR or U.S Certified Mail.

*IF YOU E-FILE, PLEASE ALLOW AN EXTRA TWO (2) DAYS TO PROCESS YOUR FILINGS.*

*Motions to appoint an umpire or Application for Turnover must be set for hearing. They can no longer be placed on submission.*

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:2 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 3

Hon. LaShawn A. Williams

### TRIAL SETTINGS

**NON-JURY** – Attorneys and parties must appear ready for trial on the morning you are set. All non-jury trials will be heard on the day they are set beginning at 10:00 a.m. There are *NO* docket positions for these cases.

**JURY** – Jury trials are set for a two (2) week docket. The Court shall notify each party or attorney of his or her specific trial date on the day of your pre-trial conference. All parties **MUST** appear for the pre-trial conference which will take place on the Friday prior to your trial date at 10:00am. If you do not appear for your pretrial conference, your case is subject to dismissal for want of prosecution or default.

All pre-trial documents must be exchanged by the parties before the date of your pre-trial conference. Parties are required to submit to the court a **JOINT JURY CHARGE** in word format to the Trial Coordinator the Friday before the Preferential Trial Setting.

There are **NO** docket positions for these cases.

\*Should the case settle prior to trial, please call or email Vanessa Richardson - Trial Coordinator, at 832-927-1732 at your earliest convenience.

### TRIAL CONTINUANCES

The Court will honor a timely-filed vacation letter, provided the case has not already been preferentially set for trial. To assert a vacation letter, please file a motion for continuance with a copy of your vacation letter attached to your motion and a proposed order.

All continuances must be filed 5 business days prior to your trial date. The court will allow any agreed or unopposed (please include a certificate of conference) Continuances to be heard without a hearing. Any other continuance will require a showing of good cause and an oral hearing. Any continuances not submitted prior to being filed 5 days before the trial date will not be considered by the Judge.

Please **DO NOT** set any Motion for Continuances on the Motions docket with the clerks!

### DEFAULT JUDGMENTS

All motions for default judgment must be on file at least seven (7) days before your trial date and can be submitted to the Court without the need for an oral hearing. An oral hearing is only required to prove- up un-liquidated damages.

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:2 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 3

Hon. LaShawn A. Williams

Homeowners' Associations seeking a judicial foreclosure must set their motion for an oral hearing, plus show proof of notice to the defendant of that default hearing.

### VACATION LETTERS

To assert vacation, you must comply with the following:

- Vacation letters must be timely filed with the District Clerk's office.
- Motions for continuance due to vacation must be filed with the County Clerk's office and served on all parties.
- Include in your motion a copy of your file-marked vacation letter and your case number, and serve all parties with same. If you have multiple cases, a separate motion for each case is required.

Please refer to Trial Continuances.

The Court will honor vacation requests that are timely filed.

### RULE 106 MOTIONS

Rule 106 motions can be submitted to the Court without the need for an oral hearing.

### PLAINTIFFS' NONSUITS AND AGREED JUDGEMENTS

Plaintiffs' non-suits and agreed judgments can be submitted to the Court for signature without the need for an oral hearing. If your case is currently set for trial or entry, please submit any non-suits or agreed judgments one (1) week in advance.

### PETITIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES

Petitions for occupational licenses are heard ONLY on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. with proper notice to the Court and to the County Attorney. Before sending in your notice of hearing, please contact the court clerk to check for availability. Bring your proof of insurance and your SR-22 with you on the day of your hearing.

### COURTROOM AUDIO/VIDEO EQUIPMENT

All courtrooms have state-of-the-art audio/VIDEO equipment, including an ELMO (document camera), computer inputs, projectors, TV screens, AND VCR & DVD players. Attorneys are encouraged to use the ELMO to present exhibits to the jury. If you are unfamiliar with its use, arrange with the bailiff to come to the courtroom early and learn. Please refer to the attached Web link for detailed instructions on use of the audiovisual equipment:

<http://www.justex.net/Courts/Civil/CivilTechnology.aspx>

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:2 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 3

Hon. LaShawn A. Williams

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### USEFUL LINKS

For proper filing procedures, please visit the County Clerk's Web site: <http://www.cclerk.hctx.net/Home.aspx>

Court Holidays and Dead Weeks: <http://www.justex.net/FAQ.aspx>

Downloadable Forms [http://www.cclerk.hctx.net/Civil/Downloadable\\_Forms.aspx](http://www.cclerk.hctx.net/Civil/Downloadable_Forms.aspx)

Ordering copies <http://www.cclerk.hctx.net/Civil/Ordering.aspx>



# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:3 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 4

Hon. William “Bill” McLeod

COUNTY COURTS  
AT LAW — CIVIL

**COURT:**

County Civil Court at Law No. 4

**JUDGE’S NAME:**

William “Bill” McLeod

**COURT ADDRESS:**

Harris County Civil Courthouse, 5th Floor  
201 Caroline, Suite 740  
Houston, Texas 77002-1900

**STAFF:**

Clerk: Tonya Garza.....	713-274-1358
Clerk: Ashley Shapiro .....	713-274-1358
Trial Coordinator: Kirina McNamara.....	832-927-1704
Bailiff: Valerie Jenkins.....	832-927-1744
Court Reporter: Alex McDaniel.....	832-927-1743

**COURT PROCEDURES:**

**TRIAL SETTINGS**

**NON-JURY** – Attorneys and parties must appear ready for trial at 9:30 a.m. on the date set in the Trial order. All non-jury trials will be heard on that day. Failure to arrive by 9:30 a.m. may result in dismissal for want of prosecution or default.

**NON-JURY EVICTIONS** – Attorneys and parties must appear ready for trial at 10:30 a.m. on the date set in the Trial order. All non-jury eviction trials will be heard on that day. Failure to arrive by 10:30 a.m. may result in dismissal for want of prosecution or default.

**JURY** – Jury trials are set for a one (1) week docket beginning at 10:30 a.m. All parties **MUST** appear at 11:00 a.m. on the Friday immediately preceding the Trial Date or your case will be dismissed for want of prosecution.

Prior to the Monday Pre-Trial Docket call, each party is ordered to exchange with all other parties and file with the court (by 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday immediately preceding the trial week), their witness lists, their pre-numbered exhibits, their motions in limine, their edited pages and line excerpts of deposition testimony, their proposed jury charge, and any relevant case law that they are relying upon. At the Pre-Trial the Court will rule on any objection to the above, pre-admit exhibits for trial, and announce the trial’s start day and time.

**PREFERENTIAL JURY TRIAL SETTING** – A pre-trial conference will be held on the Monday immediately preceding your preferential jury trial date at 10:30 a.m.

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:3 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 4

Hon. William “Bill” McLeod

Pursuant to Tex. R. Civ. P. 166, prior to this jury trial, each party is ORDERED to furnish to opposing counsel in advance with enough time to allow review for objections their trial witness list, pre-marked exhibits with inadmissible matters redacted (e.g. insurance, settlement negotiations), motions in limine, edited page and line excerpts of deposition testimony, and any relevant case law that is being relied upon. Please mark all exhibits for identification.

The parties must file a single, joint proposed jury charge, including all necessary instructions, definitions, and questions.

Even if the parties cannot agree on all instructions, definitions, or questions, the parties should nonetheless submit a single, unified charge. Be prepared to argue your objections to the jury charge on the record during the jury charge conference outside the presence of the jury. The parties shall bring in ten (10) printed copies of the jury charge, do not number the pages as some pages may be eliminated in the jury charge conference based on evidence of trial and arguments of counsel.

The parties must do all things reasonable and necessary to assure the availability of their witnesses, experts, and translators for the entire trial period.

*\*Should the case settle prior to trial timely file your settlement documents and email Kirina McNamara, Trial Coordinator, at Kirina\_McNamara@ccl.hctx.net. Please include all parties in the email to avoid ex parte communications.*

### TRIAL CONTINUANCES

The Court will honor a timely filed vacation letter, provided the case has not already been preferentially set for trial. To assert a vacation letter, file a continuance with a copy of the printout from the District Clerk’s Office attached and the case will be reset without a hearing.

All Motions for Continuance (Agreed/Uncontested) must be filed at least two (2) weeks before the trial setting you wish to continue. No continuance will be granted on cases over 200 days old without good cause. Any Motions for Continuance filed late will not be considered.

All other continuances require a hearing with proper notice to the Court.

### LATE CALLS

Do not call the court on the morning of your setting for a late call. All late calls must be made by email to kirina\_mcnamara@ccl.hctx.net, court coordinator, by 3:00 p.m. the day prior to the setting. All emails must include a cc to opposing counsel to avoid ex-parte communication and to keep everyone on the same page. If opposing counsel is not included in the email, the setting will move forward without your presence and may result in dismissal or default.

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:3 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 4

Hon. William “Bill” McLeod

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If you have an emergency the day of your setting notify opposing counsel of your emergency and of your estimated arrival time so that they can announce to the court when the case is called and the case can be put on hold awaiting your arrival and opposing counsel’s agreement.

### VACATION LETTER

Timely file your vacation letters into each of your cases with this Court.

### ORAL HEARING DOCKET

Oral hearings are held most Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. with at least five (5) workday written notice to the clerk.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEARING

Occupational hearings are held most Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

### SUBMISSION DOCKET

The submission docket is held on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. with ten (10) days written notice to the clerk of this court. Please file your Motion, Notice of Setting, and Proposed Order/Judgment. You may set any motion that does not require testimony.

### AGREED MOTION/ORDERS

Agreed Motions with Orders signed by all parties do not require an oral hearing unless notified by the court clerk.

### DEFAULT JUDGMENTS

Default judgments seeking unliquidated damages require an oral hearing.

Default judgments seeking liquidated damages or homeowners cases do not require an oral hearing. Please file your motion, certificate of last known address, proposed judgment, and ALL supporting affidavits, including applicable non-military affidavits (<https://scra.dmdc.osd.mil/scra/#/single-record>), attorney’s fees affidavit, affidavits proving damages to the Clerk’s Office for submitting to the Judge.

### ANNOUNCE SETTLEMENT

To announce settlement of your case please promptly e-file your Rule 11 Agreement stipulating your settlement. Also, please notify the Trial Coordinator of your settlement by email at Kirina\_

# HARRIS COUNTY COURTS AT LAW — CIVIL

## 1-3:3 Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 4

Hon. William “Bill” McLeod

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McNamara@ccl.hctx.net Please include all parties in the email to avoid ex parte communications. Once the Rule 11 is received, your case will be moved from its current setting to an entry docket setting awaiting your Final Judgment.