

**FILED**

**NOV 20 2019**

**COUNTY CLERK  
ELLIS COUNTY, TEXAS**



40<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COURT  
378<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COURT  
443<sup>RD</sup> DISTRICT COURT  
ELLIS COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 1  
ELLIS COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 2  
ELLIS COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 3

ELLIS COUNTY COURTS BUILDING  
109 S. JACKSON  
WAXAHACHIE, TX 75165

**FILED  
FOR RECORD**

**NOV 20 2019**

**MELANIE REED, DISTRICT CLERK  
ELLIS COUNTY, TEXAS**

**ORIGINAL**

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**COURT RULES OF ADMINISTRATION FOR ELLIS COUNTY, TEXAS**

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The District Court Judges and the Statutory County Court Judges of Ellis County, Texas have adopted by unanimous vote the following local court rules of administration to become effective November 15, 2019 (“Local Rules”), which shall supersede any previous local rules including the Court Rules of Administration dated August 1, 2012; the Supplement to the Court Rules of Administration dated October 18, 2013; the Assignment and Docketing Procedures dated December 18, 2014; the Division of Civil Matters effective January 1, 2015; and the Memorandum Agreement among the Judges regarding County Court at Law No. 3 dated March 4, 2019.

The District Court Judges and the Statutory County Courts of Ellis County shall always retain and possess the full jurisdiction bestowed upon them by Texas law, notwithstanding the Local Rules.

In accordance with the statutes of the State of Texas, where two or more courts have concurrent jurisdiction, by mutual consent the judges of the courts may: (i) exchange cases and benches without the necessity of a transfer order for purposes of providing prompt disposition of cases and accommodation to the parties, bench, and bar; (ii) transfer cases by formal transfer order; and (iii) substitute assignments as allowed by law.

These Local Rules have been approved in order to: (i) provide for the assignment, processing, and transfer of all court cases and legal matters subject to the jurisdictional limitations of the District Courts and the Statutory County Courts; (ii) designate primary duties and responsibilities among the Judges for various trial court related matters and certain administrative matters; and (iii) establish the fair and equitable division of caseloads. Accordingly – all cases, legal matters, and certain administrative duties and responsibilities are hereby assigned and docketed, and shall be processed and/or handled as follows:

**00001**

**I.**  
**40<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT COURT**

- a. Felony Criminal Cases. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all felony criminal cases including criminal jury trials, dockets, motions, pleas, and other case dispositions;
- b. Felony Writs. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all felony writs and pre-indictment motions;
- c. Judicial Warrant Officer. Along with the other District Court Judges, the review and execution of probable cause affidavits, search warrants, and/or court orders under Chapter 18A (interception of electronic communications)<sup>1</sup> and Chapter 18B (installation of tracking devices and access to stored electronic customer data) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, including without limitation so-called cell phone ping-warrants, geo-fencing warrants, and warrants for customer data held by electronic communication service providers;
- d. Grand Jury. Grand jury organization and supervision for the term beginning in January of each year, including any special grand juries and/or hold-over grand juries;
- e. Adult CSCD. Statutorily required responsibilities and duties concerning the adult Community Supervision and Corrections Department of Ellis County, Texas;
- f. Indigent Defense Plan. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with the local District Court Indigent Defense Plan required by the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and the Texas Indigent Defense Commission;
- g. IDC. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with service on the Indigent Defense Committee of Ellis County, Texas;
- h. Civil Lawsuits. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all civil cases filed with the Ellis County District Clerk's Office and not otherwise specifically assigned herein<sup>2</sup>, with such civil matters including civil jury trials, dockets, motions, hearings, and all other related civil matters;

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<sup>1</sup> Except for those interception orders required to be signed by a Judge from the panel selected by the Presiding Judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

<sup>2</sup> Within these Local Rules – see Item I.i., Item II.h., Item III.h., Item III.i., and Item IV.f.

- i. ARB and Other. Notwithstanding anything contained within these Local Rules to the contrary, so long as the 40<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge serves as the statutory local Administrative District Court Judge: (i) all administrative responsibilities and duties associated with the organization and administration of the Ellis County Appraisal Review Board as required by statute, (ii) all civil lawsuits resulting from any trial de novo appeals from the administrative decisions of the Appraisal Review Board, and (iii) all administrative duties associated with service as the statutory local Administrative District Court Judge;
- j. Expunctions and Judgment Nisi's. Notwithstanding anything contained within these Local Rules to the contrary: (i) all expunctions and non-disclosures, except those where jurisdiction is mandatory in the 443<sup>rd</sup> District Court, and (ii) Judgment Nisi's resulting from felony criminal cases pending in the 40<sup>th</sup> District Court;
- k. Sundry Adm. Duties. Sundry/miscellaneous administrative responsibilities and duties including without limitation service on the Board of the Ellis County Women's Building, appointment of board members to the S.M. Dunlap Library in Italy, Texas, and appointment of board members to the Nicholas P. Sims Library in Waxahachie, Texas<sup>3</sup>;
- l. Audit Department. In conjunction with the other District Court Judges, all statutorily required administrative responsibilities and duties associated with the Ellis County Auditor, the Assistant Ellis County Auditors, and the annual budget of the Ellis County Auditor's Department;
- m. Court Reporters. In conjunction with the other District Court Judges, all required statutory duties involving the compensation orders of the official court reporters;
- n. Juvenile Cases (Limited). In cases of conflict of interest or where recusal/disqualification would be appropriate – serving as the back-up Judge to the 443<sup>rd</sup> District Court for: (i) only those juvenile cases involving determinate sentences, and (ii) felony criminal trials involving juveniles who have been certified as an adult; and
- o. Juvenile Board. Statutorily required administrative responsibilities and duties associated with serving as a Board Member on the Ellis County Juvenile Board, along with the other District Court Judges, the Statutory County Court at Law Judges, and the County Judge.

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<sup>3</sup> All such duties result from pertinent last wills and testaments, historical precedent, and/or organizational bylaws.

**II.**  
**378<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT COURT**

- a. Divorce Cases. All divorce cases including all legal matters relating to child support, conservatorship, possession and access to children, division of assets, community and separate property issues, indebtedness, and protective orders;
- b. Suits Affecting Parent-Child Relationship. Family law suits affecting the parent-child relationship;
- c. Adoptions. All adoptions, except those resulting from Child Protective Services cases;
- d. Name Changes. Name changes for children and adults;
- e. Audit Department. In conjunction with the other District Court Judges, all statutorily required administrative responsibilities and duties associated with the Ellis County Auditor, the Assistant Ellis County Auditors, and the annual budget of the Ellis County Auditor's Department;
- f. Court Reporters. In conjunction with the other District Court Judges, all required statutory duties involving the compensation orders of the official court reporters;
- g. Judicial Warrant Officer. Along with the other District Court Judges, the review and execution of probable cause affidavits, search warrants, and/or court orders under Chapter 18A (interception of electronic communications)<sup>4</sup> and Chapter 18B (installation of tracking devices and access to stored electronic customer data) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, including without limitation so-called cell phone ping-warrants, geo-fencing warrants, and warrants for customer data held by electronic communication service providers;
- h. Civil Lawsuits – Bail Bond Board. All civil lawsuits and injunctions involving the Ellis County Bail Bond Board and/or the Board Member(s) of the Ellis County Bail Bond Board acting in such capacity; and
- i. Juvenile Board. Statutorily required administrative responsibilities and duties associated with serving as a Board Member on the Ellis County Juvenile Board, along with the other District Court Judges, the Statutory County Court at Law Judges, and the County Judge.

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<sup>4</sup> Except for those interception orders required to be signed by a Judge from the panel selected by the Presiding Judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

**III.**  
**443<sup>rd</sup> DISTRICT COURT**

- a. Felony Criminal Cases. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all felony criminal cases including criminal jury trials, dockets, motions, pleas, and other case dispositions;
- b. Felony Writs. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all felony writs and pre-indictment motions;
- c. Judicial Warrant Officer. Along with the other District Court Judges, the review and execution of probable cause affidavits, search warrants, and/or court orders under Chapter 18A (interception of electronic communications)<sup>5</sup> and Chapter 18B (installation of tracking devices and access to stored electronic customer data) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, including without limitation so-called cell phone ping-warrants, geo-fencing warrants, and warrants for customer data held by electronic communication service providers;
- d. Grand Jury. Grand jury organization and supervision for the term beginning in July of each year, including any special grand juries and/or hold-over grand juries;
- e. Adult CSCD. Statutorily required responsibilities and duties concerning the adult Community Supervision and Corrections Department of Ellis County, Texas;
- f. Indigent Defense Plan. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with the local District Court Indigent Defense Plan required by the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and the Texas Indigent Defense Commission;
- g. IDC. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with service on the Indigent Defense Committee of Ellis County, Texas;
- h. Civil Lawsuits. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all civil cases filed with the Ellis County District Clerk's Office and not otherwise specifically assigned herein<sup>6</sup>, with such civil matters including civil jury trials, dockets, motions, hearings, and all other related civil matters;
- i. Tax Delinquencies. Notwithstanding anything contained within these Local Rules to the contrary, all tax cases involving ad valorem and/or personal property tax delinquencies;

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<sup>5</sup> Except for those interception orders required to be signed by a Judge from the panel selected by the Presiding Judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

<sup>6</sup> Within these Local Rules – see Item I.h., Item I.i., Item II.h., Item III.i., and Item IV.f.

- j. Expunctions & Judgment Nisi's. Notwithstanding anything contained within these Local Rules to the contrary: (i) all expunctions and non-disclosures, except those where jurisdiction is mandatory in the 40<sup>th</sup> District Court, and (ii) Judgment Nisi's resulting from felony criminal cases pending in the 443<sup>rd</sup> District Court;
- k. Audit Department. In conjunction with the other District Court Judges, all statutorily required administrative responsibilities and duties associated with the Ellis County Auditor, the Assistant Ellis County Auditors, and the annual budget of the Ellis County Auditor's Department;
- l. Court Reporters. In conjunction with the other District Court Judges, all required statutory duties involving the compensation orders of the official court reporters;
- m. Bail Bond Board. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with serving as a Board Member of the Ellis County Bail Bond Board;
- n. Juvenile Cases. Except as otherwise provided for in these Local Rules<sup>7</sup>, all juvenile cases and hearings under the Texas Family Code including: (i) cases involving juvenile delinquent conduct; (ii) cases involving determinate sentences; (iii) hearings to certify juveniles as adults; and (iv) criminal trials involving juveniles who have been certified as adults; and
- o. Juvenile Board. Statutorily required administrative responsibilities and duties associated with serving as a Board Member on the Ellis County Juvenile Board, along with the other District Court Judges, the Statutory County Court at Law Judges, and the County Judge.

#### IV.

#### ELLIS COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 1

- a. Probate Cases. All probate cases, hearings, will contests, and proceedings, except for those limited prove-up matters specifically referred to County Court at Law No. 2;
- b. Guardianships. Guardianships over persons and/or estates including the annual review of all guardianship reports;

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<sup>7</sup> Within these Local Rules – see the limited referral to the 40<sup>th</sup> District Court in item I.n.; the limited referral to County Court at Law No. 1 in item IV.m; the limited referral to County Court at Law No. 2 in item V.n.; and the limited referral to County Court at Law No. 3 in item VI.j.

- c. Mental Health. Mental health cases and related hearings/proceedings;
- d. Family Violence PO. All Protective Order cases involving family violence other than those involving divorce or child custody proceedings;
- e. Abortion. Abortion notification cases and emergency proceedings;
- f. Civil Lawsuits. All civil cases filed with the Ellis County Clerk's Office and not otherwise specifically assigned herein<sup>8</sup>, with such civil matters including civil jury trials, dockets, motions, hearings, and all other related civil matters; and further noting that the Ellis County Court at Law No. 1 has concurrent jurisdiction with the district courts in civil cases regardless of the amount in controversy;
- g. Condemnation Cases. Condemnation cases and pre-suit appointment of special commissioner panels;
- h. CPS. Child Protective Services cases, including all resulting adoptions;
- i. APS. Adult Protective Services Cases;
- j. Civil Appeals. Civil Appeals from the Justice of the Peace Courts and the Municipal Courts;
- k. ODL's. Occupational Driver's License cases, to be handled jointly with County Court at Law No. 2 and County Court at Law No. 3 as agreed to among the County Court at Law Judges and consistent with the law;
- l. Misdemeanor Criminal Cases (Limited). As expressed in the introductory paragraph to these Local Rules, the Memorandum Agreement among the Judges regarding County Court at Law No. 3 dated March 4, 2019 is superseded by these Local Rules, and accordingly, County Court at Law No. 1 shall no longer receive any further transfer of misdemeanor criminal cases; however, County Court at Law No. 1 shall be responsible for concluding by jury trial, plea, or other disposition all misdemeanor criminal cases currently pending on its docket;
- m. Juvenile Cases (Limited). During instances of scheduling conflicts – serving as the back-up Judge to the 443<sup>rd</sup> District Court for juvenile detention hearings and agreed dispositions, along with County Court at Law No. 2 and County Court at Law No. 3; and

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<sup>8</sup> Within these Local Rules – see Item I.h., Item I.i., Item II.h., Item III.h, and Item III.i.

- n. Juvenile Board. Statutorily required administrative responsibilities and duties associated with serving as a Board Member on the Ellis County Juvenile Board, along with the other District Court Judges, the Statutory County Court at Law Judges, and the County Judge.

V.

**ELLIS COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 2**

- a. Misdemeanor Criminal Cases. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all misdemeanor criminal cases including criminal jury trials, dockets, motions, pleas, and other case dispositions;
- b. Misdemeanor Writs. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all misdemeanor writs and related motions;
- c. Criminal Appeals. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all criminal appeals from the Justice of the Peace Courts and the Municipal Courts;
- d. Adult CSCD. Statutorily required responsibilities and duties concerning the adult Community Supervision and Corrections Department of Ellis County, Texas;
- e. Indigent Defense Plan. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with the local County Courts at Law Indigent Defense Plan required by the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and the Texas Indigent Defense Commission;
- f. IDC. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with service on the Indigent Defense Committee of Ellis County, Texas;
- g. Petitions and Other. Petitions for Non-Disclosure of Criminal History Information, Interlock Petitions, Judgment Nisi's, Motions to Go-Off Bond, and Motions to Reinstate Bond;
- h. ODL's. Occupational Driver's License cases, to be handled jointly with County Court at Law No. 1 and County Court at Law No. 3 as agreed to among the County Court at Law Judges and consistent with the law;
- i. Judicial Warrant Officer. Back-up responsibilities to County Court at Law No. 3 for the review and execution of all probable cause affidavits and search warrants presented by law enforcement pursuant to Chapter 18 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (except those reserved by law for the District Courts), including without limitation traditional drug or contraband warrants, evidentiary search warrants, warrants for business and medical records, so-called cell phone dumps, etc.;



- j. Administrative County Court at Law Judge. So long as County Court at Law No. 2 continues to serve as the local Administrative County Court at Law Judge, all administrative duties associated with such service including responsibilities involving the criminal fine collections program;
- k. Probate Prove-ups (Limited). In cases of conflict of interest or where recusal/disqualification would be appropriate – serving as the back-up Judge to County Court at Law No. 1 for probate proceeding prove-up matters only;
- l. Mental Health (Limited). Serving as back-up Judge only for emergency removals when County Court at Law No. 1 is unavailable;
- m. Bail Bond Board. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with serving as a Board Member of the Ellis County Bail Bond Board;
- n. Juvenile Cases (Limited). During instances of scheduling conflicts – serving as the back-up Judge to the 443<sup>rd</sup> District Court for juvenile detention hearings and agreed dispositions, along with County Court at Law No. 1 and County Court at Law No. 3; and
- o. Juvenile Board. Statutorily required administrative responsibilities and duties associated with serving as a Board Member on the Ellis County Juvenile Board, along with the other District Court Judges, the Statutory County Court at Law Judges, and the County Judge.

## VI.

### ELLIS COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 3 (Commences January 1, 2021)<sup>9</sup>

- a. Misdemeanor Criminal Cases. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all misdemeanor criminal cases including criminal jury trials, dockets, motions, pleas, and other case dispositions;
- b. Misdemeanor Writs. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all misdemeanor writs and related motions;
- c. Criminal Appeals. Approximately one-half or fifty-percent of all criminal appeals from the Justice of the Peace Courts and the Municipal Courts;
- d. Adult CSCD. Statutorily required responsibilities and duties concerning the adult Community Supervision and Corrections Department of Ellis County, Texas;

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<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding anything else contained within these Local Rules to the contrary, this Section VI shall become effective on January 1, 2021.

- e. Indigent Defense Plan. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with the local County Courts at Law Indigent Defense Plan required by the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and the Texas Indigent Defense Commission;
- f. IDC. Administrative responsibilities and duties associated with service on the Indigent Defense Committee of Ellis County, Texas;
- g. Petitions and Other. Petitions for Non-Disclosure of Criminal History Information, Interlock Petitions, Judgment Nisi's, Motions to Go-Off Bond, and Motions to Reinstate Bond;
- h. ODL's. Occupational Driver's License cases, to be handled jointly with County Court at Law No. 1 and County Court at Law No. 2 as agreed to among the County Court at Law Judges and consistent with the law<sup>10</sup>;
- i. Judicial Warrant Officer. Primary Judge for the review and execution of all probable cause affidavits and search warrants presented by law enforcement pursuant to Chapter 18 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (except those reserved by law for the District Courts), including without limitation traditional drug or contraband warrants, evidentiary search warrants, warrants for business and medical records, so-called cell phone dumps, etc., with back-up responsibilities vested in County Court at Law No. 2;
- j. Juvenile Cases (Limited). During instances of scheduling conflicts – serving as the back-up Judge to the 443<sup>rd</sup> District Court for juvenile detention hearings and agreed dispositions, along with County Court at Law No. 1 and County Court at Law No. 2; and
- k. Juvenile Board. Statutorily required administrative responsibilities and duties associated with serving as a Board Member on the Ellis County Juvenile Board, along with the other District Court Judges, the Statutory County Court at Law Judges, and the County Judge.

All family law cases and juvenile cases shall continue to be filed with the Ellis County District Clerk's Office.

In accordance with the standing orders of the First Administrative Judicial Region, where two or more courts have concurrent jurisdiction, the court in which a case is filed may transfer the case to another court within the county and district with the consent of the receiving court when the judge of the transferring court voluntarily recuses and no Motion to Recuse has been filed.

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<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding anything contained within these Local Rules to the contrary, by this standing Order, County Court at Law No. 3 shall handle any ODL case which would otherwise originate by law in either the 40<sup>th</sup> District Court or the 443<sup>rd</sup> District Court.

In cases where a Motion to Recuse has been filed, the case shall be forwarded to the Presiding Judge of the First Administrative Judicial Region for action.

Effective on November 15, 2019.

40<sup>th</sup> District Court



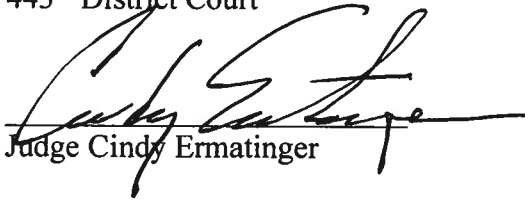
Judge Bob Carroll

378<sup>th</sup> District Court



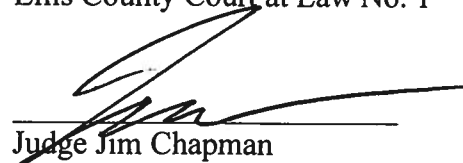
Judge William Wallace

443<sup>rd</sup> District Court



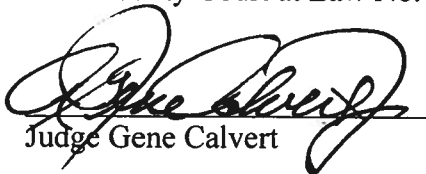
Judge Cindy Ermatinger

Ellis County Court at Law No. 1



Judge Jim Chapman

Ellis County Court at Law No. 2



Judge Gene Calvert

Ellis County Court at Law No. 3

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Presiding Judge – *TBD by election process*  
[Court Commences January 1, 2021]

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