



RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

HEARINGS DIVISION

AMENDED COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE ORDER **(Effective March 23, 2020)**

On March 13, 2020, the Governor declared a State of Disaster in all Texas counties related to the novel coronavirus (Covid-19). Given that declaration, and additional orders issued by the Governor, as well as ongoing concerns for the health and safety of those appearing before the Commission and Hearings Division employees, effective immediately and continuing indefinitely, all scheduled hearings may be subject to postponement or transitioned to a video conferencing format or telephonic hearing. No in-person hearings will be conducted at this time.

The Hearings Division Director, along with the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) and Technical Examiner assigned to a docket, will evaluate each hearing to determine whether it may be conducted by video conferencing or by telephone. Parties or their representatives may be contacted for information about the number of participants and extent of the record expected for the hearing. The ALJ or the ALJ's legal assistant will direct participants in the processes for each type of hearing indicated above.

The Hearings Division is sensitive to health and safety concerns of those participating in our processes. If it is determined by the Hearings Division that a hearing can go forward by one of the means indicated above, but a participant is unable to appear for any reason related to COVID-19, then the party should file a request to postpone the hearing. Such requests will be liberally construed.

The Hearings Division is dedicated to the expedient and just resolution of matters before it. While we are limiting staff levels in the office, the agency has worked expeditiously to ensure employees are able to continue to work on matters throughout these challenging circumstances. We ask for your patience and understanding during this time. Docket Services will remain open to receive filings by regular mail and by e-filing. However, Docket Services WILL NOT be open to the public for in person scheduling or deliveries. Page limit restrictions associated with e-filing are suspended temporarily. If you have a question related to a filing, please contact docket services at docketservices@rrc.texas.gov.

This order is subject to amendment as additional information becomes available.

ISSUED this 23rd day of March, 2020.

Dana Avant Lewis
Director, Hearings Division