

RULES OF COURT DECORUM

City of Pearland Municipal Court

I. COURTS WHERE APPLICABLE. Under the inherent power and duty of all Texas courts as codified in Section 21.002, *Government Code*, the following Rules of Decorum shall apply and govern all proceedings before the Municipal Court of the City of Pearland in the County of Brazoria, Texas.

II. FORMAL OPENING. Each daily session of the Court shall be brought by announcement of the Bailiff, Clerk or other officer of the court requiring all to rise as the Judge takes the bench.

III. CONDUCT REQUIRED OF ALL PERSONS WHILE ATTENDING COURT. While the Court is in session there shall be:

- A. No smoking or use of tobacco products.
- B. No reading of newspapers or magazines.
- C. No propping of feet or sitting on tables, chairs, benches, or railings.
- D. No loud noises or talking (this includes profane, vulgar, abusive, or indecent language)
- E. No food or beverages; and no chewing gum.
- F. No gestures, facial expressions, or sounds indicating approval or disapproval.
- G. No inappropriate attire. No shorts or cut-offs; No low-cut blouses or tops; No skirts or dresses that are short (less than halfway from knee to top of thigh); no muscle shirts or shirts without sleeves, clothing with offensive, vulgar, racist, sexist, obscene, lewd, or suggestive words, slogans, depictions, or pictures; No clothing too tight, too short, too baggy, or pants worn below the waistline.
- H. No weapons of any type
- I. No unattended children
- J. No Cell phones or pagers (Cellular phones and Pagers must be off or they will be confiscated)
- K. No hats, caps, bandanas, or any headgear, except with permission of the judge. Masks are required in Court for all persons in the courtroom.

IV. CONDUCT REQUIRED OF COUNSEL AND PRO SE DEFENDANTS

- A. Attorneys shall observe the letter and spirit of all canons of ethics, including those concerning improper *ex parte* communications with the Judge and with those dealing with discussion of cases with representatives of the media.
- B. Attorneys shall advise their clients and witnesses of Rules of Decorum that may be applicable.
- C. *Pro se* defendants (defendants acting as their own counsel) shall conform their behavior to all provisions applicable to Counsel.
- D. Counsel shall be dressed appropriately while in attendance of the court, unless otherwise permitted by the Court.

E. All parties shall be prompt in arriving for Court and in attending to Court business.

F. Once a party has entered the courtroom and is appearing before the Court, he/she shall not leave without obtaining permission from the Court.

G. All remarks of counsel to the Court shall be addressed to the Court formally.

H. The Court and opposing parties shall address each other and members of the Jury without familiarity. The use of first names shall be avoided.

I. All objections, arguments, and other comments shall be directed to the Judge or Jury and not to opposing counsel.

J. Objection shall be in proper legal form. Argument will not be entertained upon an objection except with the Court's permission.

K. Counsel shall remain seated at the counsel tables at all times except:

1. when the Judge enters and leaves;
2. when addressing the Judge or jury;
3. whenever it may be proper to handle documents, exhibits, or other evidence; and
4. when objecting to opposing counsel.

L. Counsel shall not approach the bench except with permission or on request of the Court.

M. Counsel shall not lean on the bench, sit on rails or tables, or appear to engage the Court in a confidential manner.

N. No attorney or party shall expect any Court attendant to request his or her presence prior to the commencement or resumption of any Court proceedings.

O. The Court may enforce these rules of conduct and decorum by appropriate action or sanctions.

P. Nothing herein shall prevent or prohibit the further adoption of additional rules of decorum.

V. Court Security Officers. (Court Security)

A. Court Security shall be present at all times when the Court is in session or in recess.

B. Court Security shall see that the flag of the United States of America and the flag of the State of Texas are properly displayed and respected in the Courtroom.

C. Court Security shall enforce all rules of conduct and decorum and other duties assigned by the Judge.

D. In the absence of the Judge in the Courtroom and upon instruction by the Judge if the Judge is present in the Courtroom, Court Security instructions are to be obeyed without question.

VI. ENDORSEMENT. All attorneys and *pro se* defendants are required to conform their conduct to the above stated rules of Decorum. Violation of the Rules of Decorum may constitute Contempt of Court and may be punishable by a fine and/or confinement pursuant to Section 21.002(c), *Government Code*.