

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW
LASALLE IMMIGRATION COURT
JENA, LOUISIANA**

**STANDING ORDER OF THE LASALLE IMMIGRATION COURT RELATING TO
PROCEDURES FOR MASTER CALENDAR HEARINGS, BOND HEARINGS AND
MERITS HEARINGS DUE TO COVID-19**

Effective immediately and until further notice from the Court, the LaSalle Immigration Court will impose the following procedures for Master Calendar Hearings and Individual (Merits) Hearings. This Order supersedes all previous Orders on the subject and sets out the specific procedures and instructions:

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. MASTER CALENDAR HEARINGS

- a) Any attorney representing any party may appear telephonically (for respondent) or via video teleconference (VTC) (for DHS) for Master Calendar Hearings and Bond Hearings before the LaSalle Immigration Court without prior approval and without filing a motion in advance. The Court will call counsel at the phone number located on their EOIR-28. Counsel must ensure the number on the EOIR-28 is the appropriate number where they can be reached for a telephonic hearing. This section does not apply to attorneys whose telephonic hearing privileges have been previously revoked by a LaSalle Immigration Judge. Counsel whose telephonic privileges have been revoked will need to appear in person for Master Calendar Hearings and Bond Hearings.
- b) Any attorney who wishes to appear telephonically for a Master Calendar Hearing or Bond Hearing (for respondent) or via VTC (for DHS) does so with the understanding that any paper or electronic filings to be considered by the Court must be in the official record of proceeding in accordance with any deadlines set by the Court or, if none, in accordance with the filing deadlines set forth in the Immigration Court Practice Manual. No additional filings will be accepted at the hearing if counsel does not appear in person, and the decision of the Court will be based on the documents in the record at the close of the hearing and no exceptions will be made.
- c) Any attorney appearing telephonically or via VTC waives the right to object to admissibility of any document offered in Court on the sole basis that they are unable to examine the document.
- d) If the Court is unable to reach counsel by telephone or VTC for the hearing due to counsel's unavailability, thereafter, counsel will be required to appear in-person at any rescheduled hearing. To ensure the quality of the record, anyone appearing by telephone or VTC shall be in a quiet, private location. With respect to telephonic hearings, the call may never be

placed on hold. The use of car phones, speakerphones, or phones in a public place is prohibited.

2. MERITS HEARINGS

- a) Respondent's Appearance: To the greatest extent possible, respondents will appear via VTC. However, when a quality VTC connection is not possible, respondents will appear in-person.
- b) Attorney's Appearance: Respondent's counsel and DHS counsel shall appear in-person for Merits Hearings. Respondent's counsel whose client is housed at a remote facility may appear with their client at the remote location via VTC with prior approval of the Immigration Judge.
- c) Witnesses: Parties are strongly encouraged to submit affidavits or written statements for witnesses. Parties may motion the Court for telephonic or in-person witness testimony, provided this form of testimony is deemed critical to the proceeding by the Immigration Judge.
- d) Social Distancing: The Court will require all parties to practice social distancing in the courtroom. There will be designated seats for each individual that appears and only a limited number of people will be allowed in the courtroom. In-person appearances in the courtroom shall be limited to the following individuals: respondents, attorneys, interpreters, and other individuals determined to be essential by the Immigration Judge.
- e) Extraordinary Circumstances: If respondent's counsel or DHS counsel believes that counsel has an extraordinary circumstance, then counsel may file a motion to request a telephonic hearing. Evidence must be attached to the motion to demonstrate the attorney's specific extraordinary circumstance. The Immigration Judge will make a decision based on the merits of each specific motion.
- f) If the Immigration Judge determines that an extraordinary circumstance exists that warrants a telephonic Merits Hearing, then the following will apply:
 - (i) Any attorney appearing telephonically or via VTC does so with the understanding that any paper or electronic filings to be considered by the Court must be in the official record of proceeding, in accordance with any deadlines set by the Court or, if none, in accordance with the filing deadlines set forth in the Immigration Court Practice Manual. No additional filings will be accepted at the hearing if counsel does not appear in person, and the decision of the Court will be based on the documents in the record at the close of the hearing. No exceptions will be made.
 - (ii) Any attorney appearing telephonically or via VTC must file any relevant original documents/evidence with the Court by the deadline set by the Immigration Judge.

- (iii) Any attorney appearing telephonically or via VTC waives the right to object to admissibility of any document offered in court on the sole basis that they are unable to examine the document.
- (iv) If the Court is unable to reach counsel by telephone or via VTC for the hearing due to counsel's unavailability, then counsel will be required to appear in-person at any rescheduled hearing thereafter. To ensure the quality of the record, anyone appearing by telephone or via VTC shall be in a quiet, private location. With respect to telephonic hearings, the call may never be placed on hold. The use of car phones, speakerphones or phones in a public places is prohibited.

3. INDIVIDUALS WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS OR POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST

Under no circumstances shall any individual experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection enter the Court, including but not limited to the lobby, filing window, and courtrooms. This same restriction applies to any individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, unless they have been affirmatively advised by an appropriate medical professional that they are no longer contagious. If any individual described in this section is unable to attend an upcoming hearing at which his or her presence is required, then that person shall promptly file a motion to continue with the Court. In case of an emergency, the individual may call the Court's main number (318-335-6880) to provide notification of the illness, but must follow up thereafter by filing a motion to continue with the Court.

GRADY CROOKS Digitally signed by GRADY
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Date: 2020.07.01 09:42:38 -05'00'

Grady A. Crooks
Assistant Chief Immigration Judge
LaSalle Immigration Court