



**RULES OF PROCEDURE, CONDUCT AND DECORUM
AT MEETINGS OF THE
HAYS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT**

- I. All meetings of the Hays County Commissioners' Court will be called and conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551 of the Government Code.
- II. Regular, special and emergency meetings of the Hays County Commissioners' Court are open to the public. Executive sessions may be held about particular agenda items as allowed by the Texas Open Meetings Act, and these sessions are not open to the public. Only members of the Commissioners' Court and other individuals expressly requested or ordered to be present are allowed to attend executive sessions.
- III. The Hays County Commissioners' Court meets every Tuesday at 9 a.m. In order for a matter or issue to appear on a regular Tuesday Court agenda, a request must be filed with AND approved by either a Commissioner or the County Judge by noon the previous Wednesday. Since these items often require review by the Commissioner or Judge it is prudent to submit requests prior to Wednesday to ensure placement on the next agenda.
- IV. The business of the Hays County Commissioners' Court is conducted by and between the members of the Court, and by members of county staff, other elected officials and/or members of the public requested to be present and participate, and those members of the public recognized by the presiding officer. In order to participate in a meeting of the Court and/or offer comments, a member of the public should do the following:
- A. If he or she wishes to address an item **NOT** on the Court's agenda, fill out a Participation Form and submit it to the County Clerk. These individuals will be called in the order they signed up at 9 a.m. Under state law, the Court may not deliberate on items not on its agenda, but can listen to the comments, and individual Court members can respond to questions.
 - B. If he or she wishes to comment on an item that **IS** on the Court's agenda, fill out a Participation Form and submit it to the County Clerk. These individuals may either address the Court during the 9 a.m. comment period or wait until the Court deliberates that particular item.
 - C. If he or she has not filled out a comment form but decides during the meeting that he or she would like to make comments or ask questions, raise his or her hand when that item is being discussed by the Court and wait to be recognized by the presiding officer. These individuals will be asked to state and spell their names for the record, and may be asked to provide more information.
 - D. The Court reserves the right to set reasonable time limits on speakers at its discretion.
 - E. It is not the intention of the Hays County Commissioners' Court to provide a public forum for demeaning any individual or group. Neither is it the intention of the Court to allow a member of the public to insult the honesty or integrity of the Court, as a body, or any member of the Court, the Court as a whole, or any citizen or group. Profane, insulting, or derogatory language directed toward the Court and/or any person in the Court's presence will not be tolerated, and will be subject to sanction by the presiding officer. Violation of these rules may result in:
 1. Cancellation of the speaker's remaining time;
 2. Removal from the Courtroom;
 3. A Contempt of Court citation; and/or
 4. such other civil and/or criminal sanctions as may be authorized under the Constitution, statutes and codes of the State of Texas.
- V. The County Judge is the presiding officer of the Hays County Commissioners' Court and is a fully participating member thereof. In the event of the absence of the County Judge, the senior member of the Commissioners' Court shall serve as the Judge Pro-Tem of the Court. The senior member may also delegate this duty to another member of the Commissioners' Court.
- VI. The County Judge or designated Pro-Tem, as presiding officer of the Commissioners' Court, is responsible for conducting all meetings, and members of the public who have completed a Participation Form and submitted it to the County Clerk must wait to be recognized by the presiding officer before they address the Court.
- VII. Special rules for Press and members of the Media:
- A. No media personnel or equipment, including lights, cameras and tape recorders or microphones, will be located closer to the Court bench than the railing in the Commissioners' Courtroom or the press table.
 - B. Reporters and media technicians are required to structure their movements, equipment and set-up in a manner that does not disrupt the Commissioners' Court deliberations or the public's ability to see, hear, or participate in the proceedings.
 - C. Interviews shall not be conducted inside the Commissioners' Courtroom while Court is in session.
 - D. Interviews conducted outside the Commissioners' Courtroom should be conducted in a manner that does not disturb or disrupt the proceedings of any meeting of the Court.
- VIII. The Commissioners' Court through the offices of the County Clerk and County Judge provide free of charge, as a service to working members of the media, packets of information and support documents related to the Court's agenda. These are available several days prior to court meetings or at the meetings themselves. Enough of these packets are made to meet the expected demand at the next Court session, but in the event not enough are available at a particular meeting they will be provided on a first-come, first served basis. Members of the public may request these packets from the County Judge's office, but may also be charged for them consistent with Texas Open Records laws and the General Services Commission's fee structure. Court agendas are provided at each session on a first-come, first-served basis. Court agendas are posted on the county's website each week and also are sent by fax to requesting parties prior to each week's meeting, as a courtesy, although this is not a requirement of the Open Meetings Act.
- IX. These rules of procedure, conduct and decorum at meetings of the Hays County Commissioners' Court shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Court and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Commissioners' Court.