

**HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS**  
**COMMISSIONERS' COURT ORDER**

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Date Authorized:	08/12/2008
Supersedes:	05/01/1999

**COURTHOUSE GROUNDS OPEN FORUM POLICY**

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to designate the use of a site within the Hidalgo County Courthouse grounds as a place of public speech, political discussion, press conferences, and as a place where an individual or an organization can express their views on various topics.

**APPLICABILITY:**

This policy applies to individuals, to groups, and to organizations, public or private. This policy shall be administered in compliance with the authority granted to the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court under the Texas Constitution and applicable state and federal laws.

**SITE:**

The designated site is limited to the Hidalgo County Courthouse grounds, specifically on the east side of the Courthouse in front of the Veterans Memorial. Use of the Veterans Memorial is restricted to ten (10) feet from the memorial (see Exhibit). Deviation from the designated area is prohibited for the purpose of this policy.

**UTILIZATION:**

All requests for the use of the Open Forum site shall be in writing and submitted to the Office of the Commissioners' Court Executive Officer. The request should describe the nature, the intent, and the estimated duration of the event. All requests shall be submitted two weeks prior to the scheduled event, and must be approved by the Executive Officer. In the event of multiple requests, approval for the use of the Open Forum site will be determined by order of receipt.

All requests shall be in strict compliance with applicable laws as well as all safety procedures and insurance requirements deemed necessary by Hidalgo County policies and the Executive Officer. Safety and security shall be paramount. In addition, all applicable permits, if any, as may be required by the City of Edinburg Texas and/or the Texas Department of Transportation shall also be submitted to the Executive Officer. Use of the Open Forum site shall in no way be disruptive to the day to day operations of Hidalgo County or to the services provided to the residents of Hidalgo County.

This policy shall in no way supersede any regulations and other requirements as imposed by the City of Edinburg Texas or the Texas Department of Transportation.

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This policy is subject to modification by order of the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court.  
Approved by Commissioners' Court on **August 12, 2008.**

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