



Freestone County Appraisal Review Board Pre-Hearing Information

The Freestone County Appraisal Review Board (ARB), to give each party to the protest a reasonable time for their presentation, coupled with the time constraints necessary to adequately serve the public, is providing the following information prior to the beginning of the formal hearing. The following is an overview of the proceedings that are about to take place, along with some guidelines for a productive hearing.

What if I can't come on my scheduled date/time?

- If the date or time is not convenient for you, contact the ARB scheduling clerk. You have the right to reschedule your hearing one time without reason, but the ARB will require you to provide good cause for requesting another appointment time after that.

Appraisal Review Board Members Are:

- Citizens of Freestone County, appointed by the Administrative District Judge to perform an independent review of your protest.
- Trained by the Texas State Comptroller's Office.
- **NOT** employees of the Appraisal District and are not appraisers.

Hearings are conducted at the Appraisal District Office for your convenience.

Hearing Structure:

- Introductions and swearing-in of parties to the hearing.
- The property owner has the option of presenting evidence & testimony first or second.
- Presentation of evidence and testimony by the district and property owner.
- The hearing should take **30 minutes**, allotting the property owner and appraisal district **10 minutes each** to present their evidence and testimony. This leaves **10 minutes** for rebuttal, questions, and deliberations.
- When the testimony is concluded, the Chair will close the evidentiary portion of the hearing. No further evidence may be presented.
- The ARB deliberates, considering the evidence of both parties, and may ask questions for clarification before deciding.
- The hearing is then concluded.
- *You will know the results or the panel's recommendations of the hearing before you leave.*

Hearing by Telephone Conference Call:

- You must inform the ARB in writing at least ten (10) days before your scheduled hearing date of your intent to appear by telephone conference call.
- **You must call (903)-389-5510 approximately FIVE MINUTES BEFORE THE SCHEDULED HEARING TIME to "check-in" for your hearing.**
- Provide your name and the protest/case number (s); and
- The telephone number where you can be reached.
- You are responsible for providing access to another person you have invited to participate in your hearing.

- Failure to call in at your appointed hearing time will result in the ARB's dismissal of the case for failure to appear. If the ARB is not available to hold the hearing right away, you may be placed on hold, or the ARB may call you back at the number you provided when they are available.
- You may offer testimony and argument via a telephone conference call. Any evidence for your case must be submitted before your hearing via affidavit of evidence and sworn testimony.

Other Hearing Details:

- Please turn off cell phones and all other electronic devices.
- The ARB is required to retain all evidence presented at this hearing. The ARB will not accept evidence presented on cell phones, tablet computers, cameras, or any other media type not listed in the ARB's adopted hearing rules and procedures.
- The exchange of evidence must occur before the hearing or immediately after the hearing begins. All material preserved on a portable device that the person intends to offer or submit to the ARB at the hearing must be uploaded or scanned before the hearing. **Please provide 8 copies of any printed evidence you intend to present. Six copies for the ARB, one copy for the district, and one copy for the official record. If you wish to have your electronic evidence printed out by the district, you must have it available one hour before your hearing; otherwise, printed copies will not be available to the board.** A computer and monitor will be available in the hearing room to display digital information. (Please refer to the Official ARB Hearing Rules & Procedures for acceptable file formats.)
- The ARB may not ask for or seek evidence that is not presented to them. It is your obligation to present all information related to the property under protest that you wish to be considered. The district will only present such evidence that it considers relevant to the issue under protest. You have the right to request, in writing, the evidence that the district will present in your case fourteen days before your hearing.
- When presenting evidence, please refrain from repeating testimony multiple times and refrain from talking over or interrupting other speakers.
- Keep in mind that while the district and protesting party may ask questions and offer rebuttal, both parties are presenting testimony and evidence to the ARB to seek a determination. The hearing is not an open-forum discussion.
- There will be an audio recording of all ARB hearings.
- After the conclusion of the hearing, you have an opportunity to complete a voluntary survey for the Texas Comptroller's Office regarding your experience with the ARB today.
- You will receive, by certified mail or by email (if you have requested electronic communication), official notice of the ARB's decision in an *Order Determining Protest* signed by the officer presiding over your hearing.
- Instructions for appealing the ARB's determination via Limited Binding Arbitration or District Court will be included with the official order.