

# Remote Hearings



Because of COVID-19 many courtrooms are closed or changing the way they operate. Many court hearings are now *remote*. That means some or all of the people participate by video or by phone. Read below to know how to prepare for a remote hearing.

## How do I know if I have a remote hearing?



The court will notify you if your hearing is remote. They may contact you by U.S. mail, email, or phone. They will also notify the other parties in your case.

## What if I don't have Internet or a phone?

Contact the court as soon as possible. They may:

- Postpone the hearing until everyone can participate safely, or
- Help you find a way to participate, such as free hot spots, or access to a free phone or Internet.

## What if I cannot join at the scheduled hearing time?

You must have a good reason why you cannot be present at the scheduled time. And you must tell the court *before* the hearing. Go to your court's website. It will explain how to contact the court.

## Will the court tell me how to join the remote hearing?

Yes. The court will send you instructions on how to join your remote hearing by video or by phone. Courts may use different apps and processes. Visit your court's website or call your court to find out how your court does remote hearings.

## How to Get Ready for Your Remote Hearing



Make sure you have good Internet connection.



Download the app your court uses. Examples of an app your court may use are Zoom, Webex, or GoToMeeting. Practice with the app so you feel comfortable.



Charge your computer or mobile device. If you are calling in by phone, make sure you have enough minutes.



Use earbuds or headphones, if you can. This frees up your hands, and improves sound quality.



Ask the court how you should get them any evidence, like documents or photos.



Tell the court if you have witnesses. The court will tell them how to join the hearing.

## Get Your Space Ready!



- Find a quiet place where no one will interrupt you.
- Have all your papers ready, including a list of what you want to say to the judge.
- Know what time your hearing starts and how to log on or what number to call.



## Look Good!

- Set the camera at your eye level. If using your phone, prop it up so you can look at it without holding it.
- Look at the camera, not the screen, when you speak.
- Dress neatly. Wear soft solid colors.
- Sit in a well-lit room, not too dark, not too bright. No bright lights behind you.



## Sound Good!

- Pause before speaking in case there is any audio/video lag.
- Mute yourself when not speaking to improve sound quality.
- Say your name each time you speak.
- Talk slowly and do not interrupt.

## What should I expect during the hearing?

- 1 When you first join, the judge will take you from a "waiting room" to the "hearing room." Only the people in your case will be in your hearing room.
- 2 The judge will make sure you can hear and talk, and go over all the rules.
- 3 You will see a picture or name of each person in your hearing on your screen. The first one you see is the person who is speaking.
- 4 Your hearing is live and will be recorded. Everyone there can hear what you say. It may even be open to the public.
- 5 The judge decides most cases at the end of the hearing.

**!** *Important!* You may be connecting from home, but it is still a court hearing. Pay attention, and follow all rules.

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