



# Preparing for Your Remote Hearing

## Court Decorum

Remember that, even though you are not physically in a courtroom, you are asked to present yourself as though you are. Part of court decorum includes being prepared, limiting distractions, speaking respectfully, and wearing what you would normally wear to court.

## Be Prepared

- If you have any special needs, contact the court prior to the hearing date.
- Get to know your case.
- During your hearing, have copies nearby of anything you or anyone else filed in your case.
- Test the device you will use for your remote hearing. You will need to know:
  - Where to join so you'll have a good internet connection.
  - How to turn off and on your video.
  - How to mute and unmute your audio.
  - How to rename yourself in Zoom to show your name.
  - How to apply a virtual background (if your background may be distracting).

## Limiting Distractions

- Turn off anything creating background noise, such as TVs, music, and phone notifications.
- Stay safe - do NOT drive during the hearing.
- Make arrangements to limit interruptions by children or pets.
- Stay in one place when your camera is on so everyone can see you.
- Connect from a private room where you can shut the door.
- If you do not have a safe or distraction-free area to use for your hearing, check with friends, family for quiet spaces.

## Presentation

- Dress in a way that respects the formal setting of court. Here are some ways to do this:
  - Choose a shirt without a graphic or slogan.
  - Choose a blouse or a collared shirt instead a t-shirt.
  - Wear clear glasses only.
  - Unless it's part of your religious practice, do not wear hats during your hearing.

## Speak Respectfully

- Address the judge as "Your Honor".
- Address other participants formally (Ms, Mr).
- Avoid using profanity or derogatory words.
- Let others speak without interruption.
- If you must interrupt, address the judge directly and follow their instructions.
- Be mindful of the challenges technology presents, such as:
  - Pause before speaking to allow for video and audio lags.

- Speak slowly and clearly so the court reporter can capture an accurate court record.
- Say your name before each time you speak.
- Virtually raise your hand if you need to get the judge's attention, but avoid using other reactions.

#### Tips for the Hearing

- Sit in a well-lit area with no bright lights behind you.
- Join the hearing a few minutes early and have all your documents for the hearing in front of you.
- If possible, make sure your device is plugged in and not running only on battery power.
- Find a private and quiet space. If possible, be alone in a room during the hearing. Try to limit distractions as much as possible. If others are in the room with you, ask if they can be quiet during the hearing.
- Stay in one place during the hearing.
- Use a headset or headphones, if you can. This will free up your hands and sound better.
- Mute your microphone when you are not talking. Mute all sounds on your phone or computer.
- If you are using a phone without video, do not use "speaker", as it may impact the call quality.
- Say your name before you speak so the record is clear. Be prepared to identify your role in the hearing (e.g., observer, plaintiff, defendant, witness, etc.).
- Speak slowly and clearly so everyone hears what you are saying.
- Pause before speaking in case there is a lag.
- Try not to talk over anyone else. Only one person can speak at a time. If you talk while someone else is talking, the judge will not be able to hear you.
- Have a pen and paper to take notes.

#### When your hearing starts log on or call using the information found on your hearing notice



##### **What should I do if I have trouble logging on or calling in?**

- Contact your District Court office. You may search for your office by clicking [HERE](#).



##### **How do I ask for an interpreter?**

- Ask for an interpreter as soon as you can. Do not wait until the hearing!
- Contact your District Court office. You may search for your office by clicking [HERE](#).



##### **How do I ask for a disability accommodation?**

- Ask for an accommodation as soon as you can. Do not wait until the hearing!
- Contact your District Court office. You may search for your office by clicking [HERE](#).

#### Zoom Tips

- [Joining a meeting.](#)
- [Waiting rooms.](#)
- [Testing audio before the hearing.](#)