



## Preparing for Your Remote Hearing

### Court Decorum

Court decorum is the court's expectation that you participate in your hearing in a way that respects the judge, other court participants, and the seriousness of your case. Following decorum guidelines will keep the focus on the facts of your case and not on distracting behavior or surroundings. This includes being prepared, minimizing distractions, presenting your best self, and speaking respectfully.

### Helpful Tips

#### Be Prepared

- Get to know your case
- During your hearing, have copies nearby of anything you or anyone else filed in your case
- Reach out to your [local courthouse](#) if you have any questions or need special arrangements (e.g., interpreter or ADA accommodations)
- 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)



You can find instructions and join a test Zoom hearing on the [Remote Hearing Information](#) Help Topic on the court's website by clicking on **Join a Court Hearing Using Zoom**.

#### Minimize Distractions

- Turn off anything creating background noise, such as TVs, music, and phone notifications
- 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, or a [Legal Kiosk](#) ([legalkiosk.org](http://legalkiosk.org)) for quiet spaces

#### Present Your Best Self

- 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
  - Choose slacks, khakis, or dress pants instead jeans
  - Choose non-revealing options
  - Unless it's part of your religious practice, do not wear hats during your hearing



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- Follow all instructions from the judge and court staff
- Give the hearing your full attention
- Do not eat, chew gum, smoke or vape, drink alcohol, or sleep

### **Speak Respectfully**

- Address the judge as “Your Honor”
- Address other participants formally (Ms, Mr, Mx)
- 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/emojis

### **What happens if someone does not follow court decorum?**

If anyone is being intentionally noisy, distracting, or disrespectful during a hearing, the court may mute them or move them to a virtual waiting room. If the behavior continues, the judge is likely to reschedule the hearing. Especially bad behavior may even result in fines or jail time from a formal charge of Contempt of Court.

Reach out to your local court administration to discuss any concerns you have. You can find contact information on the court’s website under [Find Courts](#). You may also ask the judge at the time of your hearing. Court staff and the judge understand that some circumstances are out of your control and not a sign of disrespect.