



PROVINCIAL COURT OF ALBERTA CONDUCT GUIDE FOR REMOTE APPEARANCES

Effective: September 24, 2020

Certain court proceedings are now being conducted remotely by online video or by phone.

Below are various best practices and points of etiquette that will help ensure your participation in a remote hearing is as effective as possible. They are the minimal expectations of the court and are not exhaustive. The directions of the presiding Judge or Justice of the Peace must always be followed.

The Provincial Court uses WebEx for its remote court appearances. Instructions for the installation and use of WebEx are available at: <https://help.webex.com/en-us/n62wi3c/Get-Started-with-Cisco-Webex-Meetings-for-Attendees>. The only exception to this is Calgary Family and Youth JDRs which are conducted by Zoom pursuant to the [Calgary Family and Youth Virtual JDR protocol](#).

Required behaviour during remote hearings

- **Recording, live streaming or broadcasting the video or audio of any remote hearing is strictly prohibited.**
- **Conduct yourself as though you were physically appearing in a courtroom.**
- **Find an appropriate space.** You must participate from a private, quiet space. If the proceedings involve any children, please ensure those children cannot hear the proceedings. Take steps to ensure that any pets in your location will not disrupt the proceeding.
- **Ensure that your phone, computer or device is plugged in or that the necessary charger is handy.**
- **Speak slowly and clearly.** Speaking slowly and clearly will help everyone follow what you are saying and will assist any interpreters.
- **Do not eat or drink anything** but water during the hearing.
- **Only one person can talk at a time.** Do not interrupt.
- **Focus on the hearing** when your case is being heard. Do not multi-task by checking your e-mail or doing other tasks while appearing in court. You may miss something important during your appearance.

Guidance for videoconferences

- **Before the hearing, familiarize yourself with your microphone, camera and speakers.**
- **Before the hearing, test your technology from the place where you plan to participate in the hearing.** This will indicate whether your Internet connection is strong enough in that location.
 - Upload speeds of 10Mbps or higher are adequate. Check your upload speed on websites like: <https://speedtest.shaw.ca>.
 - A wired connection is always faster and more stable.
- **This is a court appearance. Dress as if you are physically appearing in a courtroom. Try to find a space that also has good lighting and a neutral background. Sit facing the light source if possible.**
- **Counsel should use headphones with a microphone.** Parties should also use them if possible. This will let you hear better and pick your voice up more clearly than the microphone built into your device. It will also eliminate some background noise.
- **To the extent possible, reduce the number of other devices using your Internet connection during the hearing.** Devices such as Google Home, Alexa and Echo should be turned off.
- **Close any applications that you are not using during the hearing.**
- **Mute notifications on your computer/device. Keep your telephone on silent mode or turned off to avoid disrupting the proceeding.**
- **Log into the hearing 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.** This will give you an opportunity to address last-minute technical issues and ensure that you join the hearing as soon as it begins.
- **Your screen name should be your given name and surname.** All participants on the call, including the presiding judicial official, can see your screen name.
- **While speaking, look into your camera lens.** This gives the other participants direct eye contact with you. Do not look at the person whom you are speaking to.
- **If using a phone for the video, make sure that it is in a steady position to avoid a shaky image.**
- **Mute your microphone when not speaking.** This reduces echo and background noise.
- **Say your name for the record** every time you speak.

Guidance for Teleconferences

- **Choosing a phone:** Use a land line where possible. If using a cell phone, headphones with a built-in microphone and mute button may reduce echo and provide the clearest sound quality.

- **If using a cell phone, put it on silent mode so that notifications sounds do not disrupt the hearing.**
- **Avoid using speakerphone**, which decreases audio quality.
- **Mute your phone when not speaking.** This reduces background noise (e.g. from other persons in your household).
- **Do not put the call on hold.**
- **Say your name for the record** every time you speak.
- **If it is a situation where the court is calling you, give your direct line number, if possible.**

Media and the public

- **Any member of the media or public observing an Online Hearing undertakes to remain silent (mute their microphone) and hidden (keep camera turned off) for the duration of the Online Hearing or telephone proceeding. Once again, recording, live streaming or broadcasting the video or audio of any remote hearing is strictly prohibited.**