

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPEARING BY VIDEO ON ZOOM

Before the Day of Your Hearing:

- You will need an electronic device such as a desktop or laptop computer, smartphone, or tablet that has a camera and microphone, an e-mail account, and a reliable internet connection.
- Using a desktop or laptop computer, go to https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting. Download the program, click on the installer, and follow the steps to complete the installation.
- Using a mobile device, find the Zoom app in the Play Store for Android devices or in the App Store for Apple devices. Download the app to install it to your device.
- Once the program for your desktop or laptop or the application for your mobile device is installed, open the program or app and create an account. After logging in, you will be able to use Zoom for free.
- Allow enough time in advance of your hearing to familiarize yourself with how to use Zoom.

On the Day of Your Hearing:

- To ensure you have a good connection, use the Zoom link provided in this notice to login to your hearing at least 10 minutes before the hearing is scheduled to begin.
- You may initially be placed on hold in what is referred to as a lobby or waiting room. When you are in the lobby or waiting room, you will not hear court proceedings. You will need to wait until the Judge allows you to enter the virtual court hearing.
- When you enter the virtual courtroom, **IMMEDIATELY MUTE YOUR MICROPHONE.**
- **UNMUTE YOUR MICROPHONE ONLY** when you are responding to the Judge.
- Once you finish your response, **MUTE YOUR MICROPHONE** until you are asked to respond again.
- **DO NOT** speak unless you are directed to do so by the Judge.

If you have technical issues that prevent you from connecting to or participating in your hearing on Zoom, please contact [name and title] at [phone number and/or e-mail address] as soon as possible.

***Note: For non-criminal proceedings, the following provides a general description of the potential consequences for a failure to appear, which will need to be tailored for certain case types:*

A court hearing held on Zoom, like a court hearing held in person, is an official

court event subject to consequences for a failure to appear at the hearing. If you fail to appear at your properly noticed hearing on Zoom, the consequences, depending on the type of case, may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Cancellation of your hearing.
- Conduct and resolution of the hearing without your participation.
- Dismissal of your case if you are a plaintiff (i.e., the person who filed the case).
- Entry of a judgment against you (referred to as a “default judgment”) if you are a defendant (i.e., the person who is sued).
- Penalties such as fines, jail time, and suspension of your driver’s license.

***Note: For criminal proceedings, the following provides a general description of potential consequences for a failure to appear:*

A court hearing held on Zoom, like a court hearing held in person, is an official court event subject to consequences for a failure to appear at the hearing. If you fail to appear at your hearing on Zoom, the consequences, depending on the circumstances, may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- **Bench warrant.** The judge can issue a warrant for your arrest. You can be taken into custody at any time after the warrant is issued. For example, during a routine traffic stop, the law enforcement officer will see the warrant in the state's computer system and take you into custody. In serious felony cases, the judge will send law enforcement to arrest you at your home, place of work, or another location where you are present.
- **Failure to Appear.** You can be charged with a new and separate criminal offense of *Failure to Appear*. You can be arrested for this new offense, the judge can keep you in jail until a hearing on your failure to appear, and you can be incarcerated when you have been found guilty of a failure to appear.
- **Contempt of Court.** The judge can find you in contempt of court for willfully failing to obey a court order when you could have complied with the court order. Contempt of court can subject you to fines, sanctions, and incarceration.
- **Suspension of your driver's license.** In criminal traffic cases, the judge or magistrate can order that your driver's license be suspended when you have failed to appear in court. The suspension will be in effect at least until you appear before a judge to address the failure to appear.

- **Bond revocation or change in conditions of release.** If you are released on bond following a criminal charge, your bond can be revoked and forfeited for a failure to appear because this failure is considered a violation of the terms of your bond. Depending on the circumstances, you may be legally obligated to pay the full amount of your bond to the bondsman and the court may increase your bond, keep you in jail until your case is resolved, or impose other sanctions and restrictions. If the court did not require you to post bond and released you on your own recognizance or on pre-trial release, the judge can change your conditions of release by imposing a surety bond and other sanctions and restrictions for a failure to appear.

For additional resources to assist with your preparation for, and participation in, a virtual court hearing, please watch:

- The video titled the “Rules for Virtual Court Hearings” available here: <https://help.flcourts.org/Get-Started/Helpful-Videos/Videos-to-Assist-Litigants-Representing-Themselves-in-Court>.
- The tutorial videos on how to use Zoom on a computer or a smartphone for your virtual court hearing available here: <https://help.flcourts.org/Get-Started/Helpful-Videos/Videos-for-How-to-Use-Zoom-and-Teams-for-a-Virtual-Court-Hearing>.