

356TH DISTRICT COURT

VIRTUAL (ZOOM) APPEARANCE GUIDELINES

In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, the 356th District Court is making every effort to hold all proceedings “virtually” via *Zoom*, eliminating the need for any person to appear in-person in the Courtroom.

The Zoom Meeting ID is: 409 246 5155.

To appear in the 356th District Court Virtual Courtroom, you must have one of the following electronic devices equipped with a camera, microphone and a stable high-speed internet connection:

- Computer **Preferred*
- Laptop **Preferred*
- Tablet (such as iPad or Surface Pro)
- Smartphone (such as iPhone or Samsung)

In order to attend a hearing via *Zoom*, go to <https://zoom.us>. If this is your first time to use *Zoom* on any particular device, you may be prompted to download the *Zoom* application from the internet. If so, there is no charge for the app.

Once you have launched the *Zoom* app, follow these steps to join the meeting:

1. Click “Join a Meeting”
2. Enter the Meeting ID: **409 246 5155**
3. Enter your legal name as it appears on the Court’s Docket *****(Very Important)*****
4. Click the “Join” Button
5. Click “Allow” when prompted to allow the host to unmute you
6. Click “Join with Video”
7. Click “Join Using Internet Audio”
8. Remain muted until the Judge calls on you
9. Plug in your device any time the battery level is below 50%

*Sometimes the audio does not connect on the first try. If this happens, try again until it connects. If necessary, leave the meeting and join it again.

RULES:

1. Join the Zoom Meeting at least 5 minutes prior to your appearance time. If this is your first time to use Zoom, you may want to test it the day prior to Court.
2. When you first join, you will be in a Virtual Waiting Room. Sometimes if there are several parties in the Virtual Courtroom, the Judge may leave you in the waiting room for a period – Please wait there until you are admitted.
3. Your audio must remain connected and your video (camera) must always be on unless permitted to turn off by the Judge.
4. You must be dressed appropriately. You are not required to wear a suit or a dress, but you are not allowed to appear shirtless, in your pajamas or wearing a robe.
5. The Judge must always be able to see you from the shoulders up.
6. You are not allowed to eat or smoke. You may sip on water or other appropriate non-alcoholic beverages from time to time.
7. You must remain attentive without any distractions.
8. No outside activities are allowed, including: Driving or riding in a vehicle, Running, Walking around (inside or outside), Talking to someone else, Talking/texting on the phone or other electronic device, Cooking, Surfing the internet, etc.
9. Inappropriate language is not allowed.
10. Only one person may speak at a time – Do not interrupt the Judge or others while they are speaking.
11. If you have an issue with your connection or some other urgent matter, you may raise your hand (virtually or actually) and you will be called on by the Judge.
12. Recording any Court proceeding is prohibited. This is enforceable by Contempt of Court, carrying a possible punishment of a fine and/or incarceration in jail.

If others wish to “attend” by viewing/hearing the proceedings, they may do so on the [356th District Court’s Personal Meeting Room](#) YouTube channel where proceedings will be livestreamed upon request by any party. Spectators are not permitted to enter the proceeding via *Zoom*.

If you have any questions about appearing virtually in the 356th District Court, please contact the Court at least one day prior to your appearance date and we will be more than happy to assist you.

Very respectfully,

Steve Thomas
356h District Judge

01/25/2021