

15TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

VIRTUAL COURT APPEARANCE INFORMATION

In response to the serious health risks posed by COVID-19, and in accordance with MCR 8.110(D)(2)(c), MCR 8.112(B) and Administrative Order No. 2020-6, the 15th Judicial District Court will, to the maximum extent possible, conduct proceedings virtually to facilitate the essential business of the court.

All 15th Judicial District Court virtual proceedings shall be conducted via Zoom. Parties to a case who wish to participate in their hearings virtually must contact the assigned judge's/magistrate's office in writing by email at least 24 hours in advance of their hearing date (during normal business hours) to be assigned a specific hearing time.

Parties may participate in a Zoom hearing by using any of the following devices: telephone, mobile phone, smart phone, desktop, laptop, or tablet.

If a party is unable to appear at the scheduled time, the party must contact the court immediately to alert the assigned judge's/magistrate's staff of any issues.

The Court shall communicate directions and expectations to the "remote participants" prior to the virtual proceedings. The remote participants with whom the Court shall initiate contact in criminal matters includes prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, self-represented defendants. The remote participants with whom the Court shall initiate contact in civil matters includes plaintiff attorneys, defense attorneys, self-represented litigants, small claims mediators, and case evaluators.

After the Court's initial contact with the above listed remote participants, it shall be the responsibility of each remote participant to coordinate the virtual appearance of their necessary witnesses (if any), and to forward to those witnesses the Court's directions and expectations prior to the proceeding.

If a participant is in-custody, the Court shall take responsibility for contacting the detention facility where he or she is located and arrange for their availability.

NOTICE TO ATTORNEYS: If your client is in-custody it is your responsibility to arrange for and have any and all privileged and confidential communications with your client **prior to** his or her matter being heard by the Court.

NOTICE TO PARTIES: If you have an attorney, please contact your attorney and provide this information to your attorney. Your attorney should contact the court to request a hearing.

Technical Responsibilities of the Party requesting to appear via Zoom:

- The Court does not provide technical assistance nor support for testing or troubleshooting. Additionally, the court does not provide time during court proceedings to troubleshoot issues.
- Apple and Android Tablets or Phones: Install the Zoom App from the Apple or Android Store prior to the call. To connect to the Virtual Courtroom: Launch the Zoom app at the time of the call and join using the Meeting ID provided to you in the confirmation email.
- Windows Desktop PCs and Laptops: Go to the Zoom website (zoom.us) and connect to the Virtual Courtroom by clicking on “Join a Call” and entering the Meeting ID provided to you in the confirmation email.
- Directions for testing your device and networking prior to the proceeding can be found at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362313-How-Do-I-Test-My-Video->
- Remote participants should take time prior to the call to become familiar with the Zoom controls and test your devices’ microphone and speaker controls.
- If you are having technical issues with your equipment you should review Zoom training and support materials at Zoom.us.
- Remote participants should use a good LAN, WiFi, or substantial LTE connection to ensure a quality call. (Note: Mobile data use may incur cellular carrier charges which are the responsibility of the remote participant.)
- When joining the Zoom hearing, set your device audio and video to ON and identify yourself by name. Improper identification may delay or exclude you from participation.

Local Court Policy:

- The Zoom hearing is a court proceeding and therefore an extension of the courtroom and as such, it will be recorded. Appropriate conduct and attire are required.
- Participants should speak clearly and take care not to interrupt or speak-over one another as the Court needs to be able to identify and hear each speaker.
- Remote participants must use a private and quiet room that will be free of interruptions. (Outdoor, car, or public places are not recommended.)
- Video meetings need good, consistent lighting so participants must avoid rooms with bright windows and/or back-lighting.
- Remote participants must place their mobile devices on a solid surface with the camera at eye level. Mobile devices such as phones or tablets must not be laid flat on a desk or tabletop.
- The judge/magistrate has the right to terminate the call/proceeding if the video experience is not acceptable.

- The judge/magistrate has power over the proceeding and participants as if they were present in the physical court room.
- While safety precautions due to COVID-19 limit the number of people that can be present in the courtroom, the Court is required to make proceedings available to the public via live broadcast over YouTube. The YouTube channel links are available on the Court’s website at www.15thdistrictcourt.org

Contact Information:

Office	Contact	
Judge Burke	Kelsey Smith	ksmith@a2gov.org
Judge Perry	Karen Zaleski	kzaleski@a2gov.org
Judge Valvo	Shannon Henson	shenson@a2gov.org
Magistrate Garwood	Court Clerk’s Office	734.794.6750, opt. 1 for Traffic/Criminal – or – 734.794.6752, opt. 4 for Civil