



# Alberta Court of Justice

## Conduct Guide for Remote Appearances

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Effective: April 19, 2022

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 and is respectful of the solemnity of the court proceeding. They are the minimal expectations of the Court and are not exhaustive. The directions of the presiding Justice or Justice of the Peace must always be followed.

The Alberta Court of Justice uses Webex for its remote court appearances. Instructions for the installation and use of Webex are available at [Get Started with Cisco Webex Meetings for Attendees](#). The only exceptions to this are Calgary Family and Youth JDRs, which are conducted by Zoom pursuant to the [Calgary Family and Youth Virtual Judicial Dispute Resolution \(VJDR\) Protocol](#), and Central Region Family JDRs, which are conducted by Zoom pursuant to the Central Region – [Red Deer Family Court Virtual Judicial Dispute Resolution \(VJDR\) Protocol](#).

### Required Etiquette for Virtual Appearances

#### **For Parties, Lawyers, Witnesses and other Participants**

- Recording, livestreaming, or broadcasting the video or audio of any hearing is strictly prohibited. Participants are not permitted to audio or video record, photograph or screenshot any portion of a proceeding. Doing so could lead to contempt proceedings being initiated against you.
- Participants shall not share the meeting link or dial up information with any unauthorized individuals.
- Participants are to conduct themselves as though they were physically appearing in a courtroom.

- Where an appearance is proceeding by video, counsel, litigants and witnesses are required to appear on video, barring any technical impediments.
- Participants should join the remote appearance at least 15 minutes before court is scheduled to start.
- Participants must appear from a private, quiet space. If the proceedings involve any children, please ensure those children cannot hear the proceedings. Participants should ensure that any pets or individuals in their location will not disrupt the proceeding.
- Participants should ensure that their phone, computer or device is plugged in or that the necessary charger is handy.
- Participants should speak slowly and clearly. Remember to unmute before speaking.
- Participants are not to eat or drink anything except water. Participants are not to smoke or vape during the proceeding.
- Only one person can talk at a time. Do not interrupt.
- Participants with documents relevant to their case should have them ready. If they have been filed with the Court, identify where they are on the Court file (e.g. Paragraph 10 of John Smith’s Affidavit, filed May 1, 2021).
- Before the hearing, participants should test the technology from the place where they plan to participate in the hearing. This will indicate whether the 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. Participants must dress as if they are physically appearing in a courtroom. Counsel are expected to wear business attire.
- Inappropriate profiles or background photos must not be used. Counsel must have a professional looking background.
- Counsel must use headphones with a microphone. Parties should also use them if possible. If you do not have headphones, follow the [Remove Background Noise Instructions](#).

- To the extent possible, participants should reduce the number of other devices using their Internet connection during the hearing. Devices such as Google Home, Alexa and Echo should be turned off.
- Participants must remain on mute until their matter is called and notifications on their phone or computer must be turned off.
- Participant's screen name must be your given name and surname. Counsel should also include their year of call. The preferred screen name for counsel is year of call followed by surname.
- If using a phone for the video, participants should make sure that it is in a steady position to avoid a shaky image.
- Participants must say their name for the record before they speak.
- Those participating by telephone should not use speakerphone or put the call on hold (as it may produce disruptive sounds). A landline is better than a cellphone. • If the Court is initiating the call, the participant should provide the Court with a direct line number, if possible. • Participants should avoid using a cell phone outdoors, but in the event they are outdoors, they should be in a private location away from the wind to avoid background noise.

### **For 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.
- Observers must identify themselves as observers or media on their screen name so that the Court is aware of their status.