

Preparing to Participate in a Zoomgov Video Conference

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If you will be a **case participant** in a Zoomgov video conference with the court (attorney, witness, case party, etc.), preparing properly will ensure all involved will have a good experience using this system.

For security and enforcement of court standards, the court may disable Zoom interactions (such as chat, screen share, whiteboard, Q&A, raise hand, react, etc.).

Please note that the general prohibition on televising, recording or photographing any civil or criminal court proceedings still applies ([E.D. Va. Loc. Crim. R. 53, Loc. Civ. R. 83.3, General Order 2020-11](#)).

The court will not provide any type of support on Zoom for participants or attendees. Please contact the [Zoom Help Center](#), your local IT support, or other online guidance.

If you will be an **attendee** of a Zoomgov video conference with the court (non-participants such as the public), please [follow this guidance](#), as you will only be able to participate by phone-only connectivity.

Zoom Account and Software

1. Participants: If you do not already have a Zoom account, set one up at <https://zoom.us>. A paid Zoom account is not necessary for any interaction with the court. *Attendees do not need a Zoom account, but it does make using the system easier.*
2. Log into <https://zoom.us/profile> and set your name, phone and email. Including a photo will help identify you when connecting. *Attendees do not need a Zoom profile or to provide any identity information, but it does make using the system easier.*
3. Install the latest Zoom Client for Meetings at

<https://zoom.us/download>. Although Zoom can be used in a browser only, it is very limited. The full Zoom client is required for best functionality and best experience with the system.

4. Always keep your software up to date! The Zoom Client will automatically update itself upon launching the software, but you can also [update it manually](#).

Settings

Zoom has a lot of settings, and as Zoom updates their system they may change aspects. Below are a few settings recommended by the court to improve your video conference:

- **General:** Ask me to confirm when I leave a meeting: ON (Helps prevent unintended departures)
 - **Video:** Enable HD: OFF (Helps prevent poor video performance, and usually looks just as good as HD)
 - **Video:** Always display participant names on their video: ON
 - **Video:** Always show video preview dialog when joining a video meeting: ON (Final check before your video displays to others)
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Learning

For the most part, the court will only be using the audio and video functionality of Zoom. Other functions like text chat, screen sharing, etc., will not be routinely used, and will likely be disabled for your session, so you only need to learn the basics of using Zoom for audio and video. Learn how to select the correct source for both, and how to mute/unmute your audio, and Start/Stop your video:

1. Video: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/sections/200521865-Video>
2. Audio: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/sections/200319096-Audio>
3. Learn how to easy mute/unmute with Push to talk: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360000510003-Push-to-Talk>

4. Hot Keys and Keyboard Shortcuts to start/stop video, mute, etc.: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205683899-Hot-Keys-and-Keyboard-Shortcuts-for-Zoom>
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Recommendations

1. Mute your phone and mute all sounds from all other applications (email notifications, chat messaging, etc.).
2. Avoid using a mobile device if possible. Although tablets (iPads) and smartphones can be used, they are very limited, and the performance is inferior.
3. Avoid using battery power only (laptops, etc.). Plug into a good power source while in a Zoom meeting.
4. Unless you've confirmed the quality is sufficient, avoid using an open microphone and speakers (such as are built-into laptops, or a webcam mic). Using a good quality headset (headphones with mic) will often help ensure you can be heard and can hear others with maximum quality.
5. Avoid noisy and echoing locations. Use of a headset will improve audio quality when this is unavoidable.
6. Avoid distracting real or virtual backgrounds.
7. Avoid poor camera positioning (if possible). Try to frame yourself so you take up most the screen, and at eye level.
8. Avoid using WiFi if possible. Connection via a hard-wire Ethernet cable will always be faster and more reliable than WiFi. If you must use WiFi, make sure you're in close range.
9. Avoid running any unnecessary applications besides Zoom, to conserve your computer's processing power and networking.
10. For home networks, if possible, avoid sharing your internet service with others during the session.

Before Every Court Session using Zoom

1. Connect your device to power.
2. Make sure your internet connection is good:
<https://www.pcworld.com/article/2048594/how-to-test-your-home-internet-speed.html>
3. Test your video.
4. Test your audio.
5. Turn off all audio disruptions (phones, messaging alerts, email alerts, etc.)
6. Run a quick test to connect with another Zoom user, or use the Zoom test: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115002262083-Joining-a-test-meeting>