

**CORONA VIRUS REMOTE HEARING PROCEDURE
THIS IS THE PROCEDURE ALL CIVIL LITIGANTS WITH CASE IN DIVISION S
(DEMPSEY) MUST FOLLOW UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

Setting the Hearing

To set a hearing, persons representing themselves pro se (without an attorney) should call the Court's Judicial Assistant, Holly Hooper, at 850-606-4322 for assistance. Attorneys requesting a hearing must send an email to Ms. Hooper at hooperh@leoncountyfl.gov, with the following information:

The case style – names of the parties, and case number.

The name, email address, direct telephone number, and law firm of the attorney requesting the hearing.

The title of the motion, petition, or matter that will be the subject of the hearing.

The realistic estimate of how much time is needed for all participants. It has been our experience so far that remote hearings take longer than live hearings.

The email address of every party. This includes pro se parties.

The Judicial Assistant will provide the person requesting the hearing several available dates/times. The person requesting the hearing must then coordinate/clear one of the dates/times with all parties (persons entitled to notice and to be heard), and check with the Judicial Assistant to ensure the date /time selected is still available. If the date / time is still available, the person requesting the hearing shall immediately file a notice of hearing with clear instructions how to attend remotely and send a courtesy copy to the Judicial Assistant, who will then set the hearing. If a party refuses to coordinate/clear the hearing, the Court will select the date/time for the hearing.

If the hearing concerns legal issues only, it will be conducted via telephone. Attorneys setting hearings are responsible for providing the call-in information to any pro se parties who do not have access to email.

If the hearing is evidentiary, it will likely be conducted via Zoom video. As the hearing is calendared, a Zoom video "meeting" is set up. A calendar entry with clear instructions on how to "join" the meeting (hearing) will be emailed to all parties. The hearing is not completely set until this happens. Attorneys setting hearings are responsible for providing the Zoom invitation (attendance) call-in information to any pro se parties who do not have access to email.

Participants Other Than Parties

Parties are responsible for the attendance of all persons who will participate on their behalf. This includes the parties themselves (clients), witnesses, and court reporters. Parties must send their participants clear instructions on how to join the meeting. Participants must be given the appropriate instructions, depending on the technology they have available. See below.

Three Ways to Join the Meeting / Session (Appear for the Hearing)

There are three types of participation: computer, smart phone, and regular telephone. Although not required, the preferred participation is video/audio participation from an updated, reliable computer.

Instructions for Joining the Zoom Meeting with a Computer

Participants who have an updated, reliable computer (able to stream online video without interruption) that has a camera and/or microphone can use their computer to participate. A few minutes before the start of the meeting, participants should open the invitation email and click on the meeting/session link. The link follows the words, “Join Zoom Meeting” (see below). Zoom will do a quick app download (that might not even be noticeable) and the participant simply follows the prompts. It only takes a few seconds and a few clicks to join the meeting. Participants having trouble with their audio may have to use their telephone for audio and computer for video. To use a telephone for audio, a participant simply dials in with the telephone number and meeting ID provided in the meeting invitation email.

Instructions for Joining the Zoom Meeting with a Smart Phone

Participants can use an iPhone or smart phone to appear for the hearing. The participant will open the invitation email in his or her iPhone or smart phone, click on the same link, and follow the prompts/instructions. Certain phones require the (very quick and free) download of the Zoom Cloud Meeting App. This will be necessary for iPhone users who see an error message saying Safari cannot open the app. If it is the first time a participant has used Zoom, the participant will click on “Join Meeting.” The participant can then type in his or her name and meeting ID (see below). You may be asked to “allow” video or microphone access. If asked to choose between “use internet audio” or cancel, the participant should select internet audio.

Instructions for Joining the Zoom Meeting with a Regular Telephone

For telephone participation, all that is needed is any type of telephone. Participant connect by calling one of the telephone numbers provided under the section in the invitation that says, “Dial by your location” (see below) and be ready to enter the meeting ID number (see below). Although appearance by telephone audio only is acceptable, attorneys are strongly encouraged to do whatever is necessary to facilitate the video/audio appearance of all participants.

Participants May Have to Enable Their Speaker and Microphone Before the Session Begins

Participants should ensure that they have enabled and/or selected the correct microphone and speakers immediately after connecting to the meeting. On a computer, the participant clicks on the video camera and microphone icons on the left side of the Zoom tool bar running across the bottom of the screen. On iPhones/smart phones, there usually is an icon that can be pushed on the top right of the touchscreen to do this.

Participants Should Test Their Speakers and Microphones Before the Session Begins

If given the option while connecting to test their microphone and speakers, participants should do so. Simply follow the prompts. If not given this option when connecting, participants should go to the microphone icon on the left side of the tool bar that runs across the bottom of the screen and select “test microphone and speakers.”

Virtual Courtroom Demeanor

The spaces used by the various participants comprise the virtual courtroom and all participants must conduct themselves accordingly. Participants must not have anyone present in the room with them (other than clients with their attorneys). They must ensure there is no ambient noise in their room that would interfere with the hearing, or they must mute their connection until it’s their turn to speak. Participants must wait until it is their turn to speak, must not talk over other participants, and must not interrupt others who are speaking unless making a legal objection.

Exhibits

All exhibits for evidentiary hearings and bench trials must be pre-marked for identification purposes and provided to the opposing party and Ms. Hooper no later than 72 hours prior to the start of the hearing or bench trial. Other than witness testimony, no evidence or documents filed or otherwise presented will be considered after this deadline.

An Example of a Zoom Calendar Entry Email (“Zoom Invitation”)

The following is an example of the message in the email “meeting invitation” to the parties with the key sections highlighted. Parties can ignore the two last sections – “Join by SIP” and “Join by H323.”

Angela Dempsey is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/554076078>

Meeting ID: 554 076 078

One tap mobile
+16465588656,,554076078# US (New York)
+13126266799,,554076078# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location
+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 554 076 078
Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/aCh8M9D6X>

Join by SIP
554076078@zoomcrc.com

Join by H.323
162.255.37.11 (US West)