

Local Circuit Rule on Attending Court Remotely by Phone or Video

(a) Purpose.

The purpose of this Local Rule is to provide information to the public about attending court by phone or video. The definitions in Supreme Court Rule 45 [https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/resources/rule 45](https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/resources/rule%2045) apply to this Local Rule.

THIS RULE TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE ACTUAL LIMITATIONS AND/OR CONSTRAINTS UPON REMOTE APPEARANCES, WHICH DIFFER FROM COUNTY TO COUNTY WITHIN THE CIRCUIT, BASED UPON THE CURRENT STATUS OF ELECTRONIC REMOTE APPEARANCE CAPABILITIES WITHIN A PARTICULAR COUNTY. THE RULE FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO MAKE THE CIRCUIT'S BEST EFFORT TO RECONCILE THE CERTAIN INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN SUPREME COURT RULE 45 AND PREVIOUSLY EXISTING SUPREME COURT RULES NOW IN PLACE AND USE.

(b) How to Appear Remotely.

You ***MAY*** have the option to attend your court date by phone or video. This is called a remote court appearance, remote court date, appearing remotely, video court or Zoom court.

If you are attending by video, you can find the Zoom Meeting ID, Password, and Link for ***each individual county within the First Circuit*** at <http://www.firstcircuitil.org/news/first-circuit-links-video-court>

(c) Which Documents Must Include Remote Appearance Information.

All summonses, notices, and court orders setting court dates where case participants have the option to appear remotely shall include the following: (1) the Zoom Meeting ID and Password and (2) the courthouse address and courtroom number.

(d) How to Get Help Appearing Remotely.

Visit ilcourts.info/AllRemoteCourtResources for remote court resources, including written instructions and short videos on how to Zoom from a computer and mobile device.

(e) When You Can Choose to Appear Remotely or in Person and When You Have to Ask for Permission to Appear Remotely.

In Civil Matters, Criminal Matters, Juvenile Cases (Abuse, Neglect, Dependency, and Delinquency Matters) and those Traffic Matters in which a court appearance is required:

- i. Case participants shall be permitted to attend court by appearing remotely pursuant to any Standing Order of the County, or Standing Order of the judge presiding over that matter.
- ii. If there is no applicable Standing Order, you must ask the judge presiding over the case for permission to appear remotely, in a written motion.

(f) When You Must Appear in Person.

In criminal matters that involve the possibility of jail or prison time, jury trials must be held in person, except that witnesses may be allowed to testify remotely with the approval of the judge presiding over the case and with the agreement of the parties.

A judge presiding over a case may order you or another case participant to appear in person for reasons specific to the case, including failure to act in accordance with Section (h) during a remote court date.

(g) How to Ask for Permission to Appear Remotely When Approval is Required.

All Supreme Court Rules and Local Rules apply when filing a written motion to ask permission to appear remotely.

(h) How to Act When Appearing Remotely.

A remote court appearance is a court appearance, and you must act the same way you would if you were appearing in person in the courtroom. All the same rules regarding demeanor, language, dress, civility, and respect apply to all remote court dates.

(1) How to Get Ready

You should use best efforts to appear remotely from a quiet place without distractions. You should make sure you have a stable internet or phone connection, fully charged device, and functioning video and audio.

(2) How to Dress When Appearing by Video

You should dress as if you are attending court in person in the courtroom. Hats or headwear are not permitted except for religious or medical reasons, and sunglasses must be removed.

(3) How to Identify Yourself

If you are appearing by video, you must identify yourself properly on screen. Nicknames and pre-assigned names such as “PHONE123” do not help the court identify who should be allowed into the remote courtroom and may result in a delay in admission, or non-admission to the remote courtroom.

(4) How to Participate in the Remote Proceeding:

You should remain muted until your case is called or you are asked to unmute. Any members of the public or media participating in the proceeding must remain muted and not interfere with the remote court date unless asked to speak.

As with any court date, you must be courteous, civil, and respectful to all case participants. Only one person may speak at a time, and case participants shall not speak over one another.

If you are appearing by video, you should leave your video on unless you are directed otherwise. No unsuitable filters or backgrounds permitted.

Eating, drinking, or chewing gum is not allowed, and the use of tobacco or vaping products is prohibited

Operating a motor vehicle while attending remote court is not allowed.

You should use best efforts to remain in one place while appearing remotely, and avoid moving around (for example, appearing from a moving vehicle or pacing) or stepping away without permission.

All electronic devices aside from the one you are using for the remote court date should be turned off or silenced and notifications should be muted.

If the judge presiding over the case determines that you are behaving in a disruptive manner, the judge may give a warning and an opportunity to make changes. However, if the behavior continues, the judge may mute or remove you or order you to appear in person.

If the judge presiding over the case determines your behavior is abusive to other participants or of a serious nature, you may be removed immediately, without warning.

(5) Recording

You may not record or take any pictures or screen shots, or otherwise capture an image or recording of a remote court date.

(i) Where the Local Rule and Any Amendments Will Be Shared.

Information in this Local Rule and any amendments shall be posted on the Circuit Court's website, Circuit Clerk's website, and public areas of the courthouse.