

District of Columbia Court of Appeals  
Remote Videoconference Oral Argument Protocols for Participants  
October 12, 2022

**Introduction:**

Effective September 1, 2022, upon the court’s return to in-person oral argument, the court began a pilot project where a party may request to proceed with hybrid oral argument and appear remotely using the Zoom Government platform. A judge may similarly appear remotely for hybrid oral argument. All oral arguments will continue to be live streamed on the [D.C. Court of Appeals YouTube channel](#).

The D.C. Court of Appeals uses the Zoom government platform, which has enhanced security features.

We are providing these participant protocols for your review and encourage you to prepare, practice, and — when issues may arise — exercise patience.

**Technical Instructions:**

- You may connect to the oral argument using a device with a camera--desktop or laptop computer, tablet, or smart phone.
- If you are unfamiliar with Zoom videoconferencing software, many resources are available. Zoom provides a [Quick Start Guide](#) that explains how to register for a zoom account and how to join a test meeting to check your audio and video. YouTube is another resource for video tutorials regarding Zoom. You may type “Zoom tutorial for beginners” into the search box to find a list of tutorials.
- You may review Zoom training and support materials at <https://www.Zoom.us>. Unfortunately, the Court is not able to provide you with technical assistance for troubleshooting connection problems.
- We recommend that you test your equipment’s microphone and speaker controls and your internet connection prior to the oral argument. Find directions at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362313-How-%20Do-I-Test-My-Video>.
- You should have a good network, Wi-Fi, or substantial LTE cell phone connection to ensure a quality connection.
- Both counsel arguing the case and counsel sitting as second chair may participate in the Zoom call, but information for both must be provided to the clerk’s office in advance of oral argument. (As in an in-person oral argument,

counsel sitting as second chair does not have an opportunity to speak and should have their microphone and camera off for the duration of oral argument.)

### **Best Practices:**

- The remote argument is an official court. Appropriate conduct and attire are required.
- When joining the Virtual Courtroom by video, your display name should indicate your name and who you represent (e.g., “Jane Smith, for appellant”). Instructions for changing your display name are available at <https://support.palcs.org/hc/en-us/articles/226794367-Changing-Your-%20Display-Name-in-Zoom-Rooms>.
- If you cannot use video, for phone participation, you must notify the Clerk’s Office in advance of the phone number you will use by calling (202) 879-2707.
- You should participate from a private, quiet room that is free of disruptions. When you are not arguing or answering the judges’ questions, please put your microphone on mute.
- Lighting in the room should be overhead or in front of you; warm-hued lights look best. Avoid side lighting, backlighting, and sunlit windows that illuminate surfaces unevenly.
- Zoom has a virtual background feature by which you may use a photograph as your background. The court will provide a background of the courtroom which we encourage participants to use if possible. For best results and to avoid blurring between the litigant’s features and the background, have a blank wall/surface immediately behind you. Please test this feature. Zoom provides instructions for using virtual backgrounds at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background>. If you cannot use the court provided virtual background, please choose a simple background.
- Place the camera on your computer, laptop, or mobile device at eye level and at approximately an arm length’s distance. If you use a mobile device, it should

be mounted on a stationary, upright surface. You are not required to stand during your argument.

An example of a videoconference oral argument from the Texas Supreme Court is available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29VN8\\_UCgls](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29VN8_UCgls).