

August 20, 2020



COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH OF ALBERTA

ANNOUNCEMENT

INSTRUCTIONS AND ETIQUETTE GUIDE FOR ONLINE HEARINGS FOR COUNSEL, PARTIES, WITNESSES, MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC

During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as the Court prepares for post-pandemic operations, a number of proceedings will continue to be conducted via online videoconference (Online Hearings).

Until further notice, all Online Hearings will be conducted using the Cisco WebEx Meeting application. Instructions for the installation and use of WebEx are available here: <https://help.webex.com/en-us/n62wi3c/Get-Started-with-Cisco-Webex-Meetings-for-Attendees>. Additional troubleshooting information is available on the Court's website, at: <https://albertacourts.ca/qb/court-operations-schedules/remote-hearings-protocol-troubleshooting>.

All policies with respect to the use of recording equipment in courtrooms apply to Online Hearings. Recording, live streaming or broadcasting the video or audio of any Online Hearing by Counsel, parties, witnesses, any member of the public or the media is strictly prohibited.

Unless otherwise provided in this Notice, Online Hearings are governed by the same set of expectations and rules as in-person hearings. Counsel, parties, members of the media, and others who participate in Online Hearings are expected to conduct themselves as though they are physically appearing in a courtroom. In addition, Counsel, parties, witnesses, the media and the public are expected to review and comply with the following general guidelines for Online Hearings:

1. Attire:

Parties and witnesses appearing in an Online Hearing are expected to dress appropriately, as though they are physically appearing in a courtroom.

Unless otherwise directed by the presiding Justice, it is not necessary for Counsel to gown for Online Hearings. Business attire is required.

2. Technology:

All participants in an Online Hearing must have access to:

1. A computer, laptop or tablet equipped with a camera and microphone, capable of running Cisco Webex;
2. A high-speed internet connection with reliable connectivity and coverage.

Participants should ensure that their devices are fully charged.

All other applications or browser windows should be closed to maximize your bandwidth and eliminate notifications.

A headset with a microphone is strongly recommended, as it provides a better audio experience and reduces background noise for others when you are speaking.

3. Testing:

Counsel, witnesses and parties who are participating in an Online Hearing are expected to familiarize themselves with the technology and ensure that they are fully prepared for their appearance, including testing their equipment. If possible, you should re-test your technology from the location where you plan to participate in the hearing.

4. Location:

Ensure that you are in a quiet, private area with appropriate lighting. Avoid setting up your device in front of a window, as you will appear in shadow. The background should be free of excessive noise and visual distractions.

Do your best to ensure that there will be no interruptions from children or pets. Devices such as Google Home, Alexa and Echo should be turned off.

Keep a telephone close by in the event that there are problems with the video link, but please keep the telephone on silent mode to avoid interruptions.

5. Conduct During an Online Hearing:

Counsel and parties are expected to introduce themselves for the record, and announce their appearance each time they speak.

Your screen name should be your given name and surname.

If you are taking notes using your computer keyboard, please ensure that you are muted when you do so.

Keep yourself on mute unless speaking.

Speak clearly and slowly.

When speaking, look directly at your camera, not at the screen.

As in a courtroom, refrain from eating or drinking anything but water during the hearing.

Only one person can talk at a time. Do not interrupt. If you have an objection, response or comment and it cannot wait, raise your hand to indicate that you want to speak.

6. 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.