



New Jersey Judiciary Family Practice Division

Domestic Violence Remote Hearing Instruction Sheet for Litigants

The New Jersey court system is committed to making sure everyone has access to justice and due process, whether their court hearings are held in person or remotely. This guide gives helpful tips for remote or “virtual” hearings.

New Jersey courts use several programs and platforms for video conferencing, such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Scopia. This guide gives general guidance without regard to the specific platform being used. The court will contact you regarding the court date, time and type of platform that will be used for your specific hearing. Court staff will also give you instructions on uploading any evidence you may want the court to consider.

Tips for Virtual Court Hearings

- Determine in advance what device you will use to access the hearing (i.e. computer, smart phone, tablet). Make sure your device’s camera and speakers are working properly. If possible, log in to the platform before a scheduled remote hearing to practice using it.
- Refer to the Judiciary Website (njcourts.gov) in the Self-Help section for instructions and a video on participating in a remote court event.
- Wear solid colors that are easily viewed on camera, avoid patterns.
- Be aware others can see what’s behind you. Consider using a solid background instead of full camera view if that is an option on your platform. Pay attention to lighting—sitting in front of a window can make you look “washed out” or difficult to see.
- Minimize noises and distractions to the extent possible. When you are not speaking, mute your microphone. Turn your phone on silent and minimize or close other windows on your computer screen to avoid sounds and notifications (this may also help the program run more smoothly).
- Consider confidentiality limitations. If your communications are confidential, ensure that others in your home can’t hear you.
- Look at the camera when you are speaking. Position the camera at about eye level if possible.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Identify yourself by name whenever you speak. There may be an audio lag, so pause before and after speaking to account for this.
- Be flexible but remember this is a court event. Things may go wrong with the technology, and all participants may need to be extra patient and forgiving. Treat an online hearing with the seriousness with which you would treat an in-person hearing.