

**United States Bankruptcy Court
District of Connecticut**
Procedures and Guide for Remote Appearances using ZoomGov

In connection with the General Orders Regarding Court Operations Under the Exigent Circumstances Created by COVID-19 (*see* www.ctb.uscourts.gov) (the “General Orders”), the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Connecticut (the “Court”) is continually reviewing its procedures regarding telephonic and other remote appearances. Since the issuance of the General Orders, most non-evidentiary hearings and conferences before the Court have been held telephonically utilizing court approved telephonic hearing vendors.

Effective June 29, 2020, the Court is adding the ZoomGov platform for participants and attendees to appear remotely at hearings and conferences. ZoomGov has both telephone and video capability. The Court provides this guide to assist attendees and participants in successfully appearing remotely using ZoomGov (by phone or video) in hearings and conferences set before our Court during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If a party who is appearing remotely at a scheduled hearing or conference fails to respond to the call of the matter on the Court calendar, the Court may pass the matter or may treat the failure to respond as a failure to appear. A hearing or conference generally will not be rescheduled due to the failure to appear. A party who fails to appear as scheduled may face sanctions from the Court. Sanctions may include denying the matter for failure to prosecute, proceeding in the absence of a party who fails to appear, or a monetary sanction.

If you have additional questions regarding a scheduled hearing, please contact the appropriate courtroom deputy at:

Hartford: CourtroomDeputy_Hartford@ctb.uscourts.gov

Bridgeport: CourtroomDeputy_Bridgeport@ctb.uscourts.gov

New Haven: CourtroomDeputy_NewHaven@ctb.uscourts.gov

In addition to this document, Zoom provides many guides and tutorial videos with helpful information on using the Zoom platform, which has an almost identical layout as ZoomGov. We encourage you review the Zoom materials below to familiarize yourself with the audio/video basics of using ZoomGov.

1. Video: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/sections/200521865-Video>
2. Audio: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/sections/200319096-Audio>
3. Learn how to easy mute/unmute with Push to talk: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360000510003-Push-to-Talk>
4. Hot Keys and Keyboard Shortcuts to start/stop video, mute, etc.: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205683899-Hot-Keys-and-Keyboard-Shortcuts-for-Zoom>

The ZoomGov webpage to join a video or telephonic hearing before our Court is: www.zoomgov.com.

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TELEPHONIC APPEARANCES USING ZOOMGOV

Individuals may participate telephonically in hearings using the ZoomGov audio connection only. A telephone or cell phone is required (standard telephone charges may apply). No Zoom or ZoomGov account is necessary to participate telephonically and no pre-registration is required.

Telephonic appearances are connected directly to the courtroom's audio system and electronic recording equipment and create an official record of the scheduled hearing or conference.

All parties participating in the scheduled hearing or conference should be able to hear all parties without difficulty or echo. To ensure the quality of the official record of the scheduled hearing or conference, telephonic participants should use a “land line” telephone.

The use of a cell phone during a telephonic appearance is discouraged due to greater potential for disruptive surroundings or poor connection. Any party during a telephonic appearance may be muted or disconnected from the scheduled hearing or conference at the discretion of the Court.

The Court also discourages the use of speakerphones, public telephone booths, phones while driving, or phones used in public places and such use may also result in the party being disconnected from the scheduled hearing or conference at the discretion of the Court.

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TELEPHONICALLY CONNECTING TO A HEARING

Using a telephone, dial the number below that is closest to your location (this ensures a better-quality call):

East Coast callers: 646-828-7666

West Coast callers: 669-254-5252

International callers should contact the courtroom deputy for the appropriate number to call.

Once dialed, use the ZoomGov information received from the Court provided in the Notice of Hearing.

1. Meeting ID: When prompted, enter the Meeting ID, then #.
2. Participant ID: When prompted, enter a Participant ID, then #, (or to bypass it, simply enter #).
3. Meeting Password: When prompted, enter the Meeting Password, then #.

Upon connecting to the hearing, please **mute** your phone until your case is called or you are otherwise addressed by the Court.

You may choose to mute your phone device directly or enter *6 on your phone to mute your ZoomGov connection. If your ZoomGov connection is muted, you may unmute your ZoomGov connection by entering *6 on your phone.

USING THE ZOOMGOV ONLINE VIDEO DASHBOARD DURING A TELEPHONIC APPEARANCE

While appearing telephonically, participants and attendees may choose to log into an online video dashboard. Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, signing into ZoomGov's video dashboard during a telephonic appearance is optional.

The dashboard allows a participant or attendee to have on screen control of their mute features, to rename their participant label, to view the names or phone numbers of the other participants and attendees, and even to transmit their video image, if desired.

To use the dashboard, you must log onto the session at www.zoomgov.com or on the Zoom app using a computer or mobile device. With the ZoomGov information supplied by the Court, log into the video dashboard using a Meeting ID and password. The password for the video dashboard will be different from the numeric password received for telephonic connections. The password for the video dashboard will contain letters, numbers, and special characters.

Again, a Zoom or a ZoomGov account is not required to log into the online video dashboard.

If using the online video dashboard, please change your dashboard label to your complete name to assist the Court in creating an accurate record of the proceedings. Also, refer to Video Appearance section of this document which begins on Page 4 and the Best Practices for Video Appearances on Page 7 of this document.

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BEST PRACTICES AND TIPS FOR USING ZOOMGOV DURING TELEPHONIC APPEARANCES

1. Unless and until it is your turn to speak, please mute your audio to minimize background noise.
 - a. If connected to ZoomGov audio by telephone, you can mute or unmute your connection by pressing *6 on your phone.
2. When you first speak—and each time you speak after someone else has spoken—please say your name. This may seem awkward, but is essential to making a good court record. The only part of the hearing being recorded is the audio. If a transcript is requested, it is sometimes difficult for the transcriber to know who is speaking.
3. If available, a headset-microphone often provides better sound quality for listening and speaking.
4. If you intend to speak at the hearing, please find a quiet place from which to participate. Close all doors around you in the room to limit disruption.

VIDEO APPEARANCES USING ZOOMGOV

During a hearing or conference with video participants, the Court recording contains only the audio portion of the hearing or conference. The audio feed of video appearances are connected directly to the courtroom's audio system and electronic recording equipment and create an official record of the scheduled hearing or conference. No recording of the video transmission is recorded by the Court.

Participants and members of the public should remember that although conducted remotely, these hearings are official court proceedings, and individuals should act accordingly. If video is enabled, please wear attire consistent with the decorum of court proceedings. ZoomGov permits the use of virtual backgrounds to safeguard your privacy. If you choose to use a virtual background, please avoid backgrounds that are offensive or distracting.

To ensure the quality of the official record of the scheduled hearing or conference, video participants are strongly encouraged to use a secure and dependable internet provider with a wired LAN connection. A wireless internet connection is strongly discouraged for its diminished performance of the overall video quality. Poor or disruptive connection may result in a party being disconnected from the scheduled hearing or conference at the discretion of the Court.

All parties participating in the scheduled hearing or conference should be able to hear all parties without difficulty or echo. If you hear audio echo or audio feedback during your meeting, there are 3 likely causes:

- A participant has both the computer and telephone audio active
- Participants with computer or telephones speakers that are too close to each other
- Multiple computers with active audio are in close proximity to each other.

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BEFORE CONNECTING VIA VIDEO FOR A HEARING OR CONFERENCE

A Notice of Hearing will include a Meeting ID, an *alpha-numeric* Password, Telephone Numbers and *all-numeric* Password/Pin. This information will be needed to successfully connect to a hearing or conference using the ZoomGov platform. The ZoomGov connection information will also be posted on the court's website under the calendar pages.

We strongly recommend testing your connection the day before a hearing, to identify and resolve technical difficulties. Please join all hearing at least 10 minutes prior to a scheduled hearing time.

Video connections will require a computer, tablet, or smartphone with a built-in or attached camera. The audio connection may be made through the device itself or through a separate phone connection. Upon joining a meeting, ZoomGov will prompt an opportunity to check your audio connection. In either audio setup, using headphones with a microphone is encouraged to reduce background noise and feedback.

If using a computer, you may be prompted to download and run Zoom. If using a tablet or smartphone, there is a free Zoom app available for download in most app stores.

TO JOIN A HEARING VIA VIDEO

During a video appearance, remember that your audio feed can be connected either via computer audio or by telephone audio. For either audio option, please connect to the video feed first.

1. **Joining the video portion of the hearing**
 - a. If provided with a link in a Notice of Hearing or an email, click the link (or copy and paste it into a browser window) to join at the appropriate time.
 - b. If you do not have a link, you may also join the hearing by visiting <https://zoomgov.com/join> on any browser, or by opening the Zoom app on a tablet or smartphone, and manually entering the Meeting ID and password provided by the Court in the Notice of Hearing. (If you have not already downloaded the Zoom app and your device requires it, you may be instructed to download it at this time.)

2. **Joining the audio portion of the hearing** - Once connected to the video portion, you must choose between two audio options: computer or telephone. Choose whichever will provide you the better audio quality, both outgoing and incoming.
 - a. **Computer audio** – choose this option if you have a built in or attached microphone and speakers. You have an opportunity to test your audio at this point by clicking on “Test Computer Audio.” Once you are satisfied that your audio functions properly, click on “Join audio by computer.” You should now be connected to the Court’s video session. Mute your session until your case is called or you are otherwise addressed by the Court. *Skip to step #3.*
 - b. **Telephone audio** – choose this option if you have no audio equipment on your computer or other mobile device, or it is malfunctioning. Then follow the

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onscreen instructions to connect the phone audio to your video connection. This usually will involve the following steps:

- i. On your phone, dial 646-828-7666 (East Coast) or 669-254-5252 (West Coast)
 - ii. When prompted, enter the Meeting ID number (provided in your invitation), then #.
 - iii. When prompted, enter your participant ID then # (to be associated with your computer log in). *This ID is provided to you by Zoom upon selecting the telephone audio option.*
 - iv. At this point, ZoomGov will sync your video and telephone feeds and identify you appropriately. You should now be connected to the Court's video session.
 - v. Upon connecting to the hearing, please **mute** your connection until your case is called or you are otherwise addressed by the Court. The courtroom deputy will connect you to the live session once court is opened.
3. If the Host has enabled the “waiting room” feature, you may see a “Waiting for the host to start this meeting” or “Please wait, the meeting host will let you in soon” message.

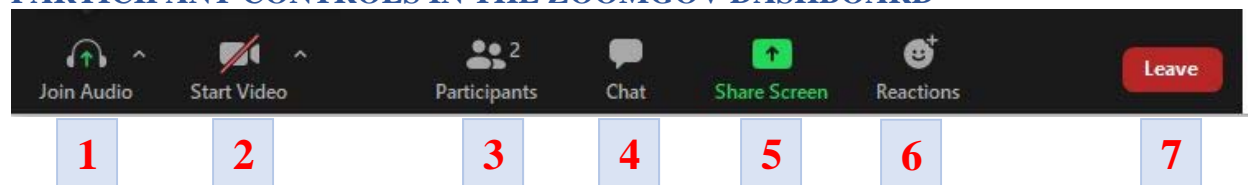
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BEST PRACTICES AND TIPS FOR USING ZOOMGOV FOR VIDEO APPEARANCES

1. Test the video and audio capabilities of your computer or mobile device in advance of the hearing, preferably a day in advance.
 - a. You can do this by entering the ZoomGov session with the ZoomGov connection information in the Zoom email or hearing notice. ZoomGov will prompt you that your meeting hasn't started yet, but you may test the connection by following the onscreen instructions.
2. Participants and members of the public should at all times remember that although conducted remotely, these hearings are official court proceedings, and individuals should act accordingly.
 - a. If video is enabled, please wear attire consistent with the decorum of court proceedings.
 - b. ZoomGov permits the use of virtual backgrounds to safeguard your privacy. If you choose to use a virtual background, please avoid backgrounds that are offensive or distracting.
3. When you first speak—and each time you speak after someone else has spoken—please say your name. This may seem awkward but is essential to making a good court record. The only part of the hearing being recorded is the audio. If a transcript is requested, it is sometimes difficult for the transcriber to know who is speaking.
4. For vastly improved performance, use a hardwired LAN connection and not a wireless or cellular data connection.
 - a. If you are connecting to the hearing using a wireless device, you should situate yourself in a location with a strong wireless signal.
5. If available, a headset-microphone often provides better sound quality for listening and speaking.
6. ZoomGov video participants are permitted to specify a display name. If using video, please specify your complete name to assist the Court in creating a record of the proceedings.
7. If you are using an external camera and/or microphone, plug them in before opening the Zoom application. A headset is recommended.
8. Only 1 microphone and speaker system should be active per physical location to avoid a loud screeching sound.
9. Be sure to mute yourself when you are not speaking.
 - a. If connected to the ZoomGov or Zoom audio by telephone, you can mute and unmute your connection by entering *6 on your phone.
10. If you intend to speak at the hearing, please find a quiet place from which to participate. Close all doors around you in the room to limit disruption.
11. Do not situate yourself with a window or other strong light source directly behind you as that will significantly darken your image.
12. Zoom and ZoomGov video participants are permitted to specify a display name. If using video, please specify your complete name to assist the Court in creating a record of the proceedings. If using the ZoomGov or Zoom online platform via computer or app, you may use the “rename” feature to adjust your name on the dashboard visible to the Court and the other hearing participants.

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PARTICIPANT CONTROLS IN THE ZOOMGOV DASHBOARD



On a computer, a menu bar containing participant tools may appear and disappear as you mouse over the Zoom meeting (or tap the screen on a tablet or phone), typically at the bottom of the screen. Mobile app interfaces will appear differently but contain most of the same functionality.

1. Join Audio – if you haven’t selected an audio connection option, this button is used to select either connecting to audio through the computer or a phone connection. Click the up arrow next to the Join Audio button for more audio settings.
 - a. Mute/Unmute your microphone – Once connected to audio, this button will turn into your Mute/Unmute button.
 - b. Click the up arrow next to the microphone icon to open audio settings. Here you change your speaker and microphone settings.
2. Start/Stop your video feed (Turn on/off camera) – Click the up arrow next to the camera icon to open video settings. Here you can change your camera settings.
3. Participants – Click to open a pop-out screen that shows a list of participants in the meeting. From this panel, all participants are visible. You may change your onscreen name/label from this panel by clicking “More” next to your name and selecting “rename”. The participant panel also includes a “Raise Hand” icon that you may use to raise a virtual hand to indicate that you’d like to speak next or ask a question, without interrupting the current speaker.
4. Chat – This feature will often be disabled. If enabled, click to open the Chat panel where you can start or respond to a chat.
5. Share your screen – If enabled for participants, you may click to start sharing your desktop display or any window/application on your computer with others in the meeting. Click the up arrow to reveal sharing options. This option may be disabled for participants.
6. Reactions – Not for use in court proceedings.
7. Leave Meeting – Disconnect and leave the meeting. Other remaining participants will remain in the meeting room until the Host ends the meeting.

Somewhere on the Zoom dashboard screen (normally in the top right corner of the screen) is also a choice to toggle between “speaker” and “gallery” view. “Speaker view” shows the active speaker. “Gallery view” tiles all of the meeting participants.

For more information and instructional videos see the Zoom Help Center at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>.