

How to Participate in Eau Claire County

Remote Court Hearings




Because of COVID-19 all courtrooms are closed, and court hearings are being conducted **remotely** with very limited exceptions. A remote hearing is when some or all of the people participate by video or by phone instead of in person. The information below may help you prepare for a remote hearing.

How do I know if I have a remote hearing?



- Your paperwork will indicate if your hearing is remote. This may be through a Notice of Hearing or other paperwork that is served on you by mail or personal service.
- If you receive text alerts, they will also indicate if your hearing is remote (by Zoom).

 **Important!** You may be participating from home, but it is still a court hearing. Pay attention and follow all rules.

What if I don't have reliable internet or a phone?

Find a location that allows for a reliable phone connection at a minimum. Contact your attorney for further assistance.

What if I cannot join at the scheduled hearing time?

You must have a good reason why you cannot be present at the scheduled time. You must request an adjournment in writing at least 48 hours before the hearing. Please be advised that your request may be denied and you will need to appear for your hearing.

Will the court tell me how to join the remote hearing?

Yes. The court will send you instructions on how to join your remote hearing using **Zoom** by video or by phone.

How to Get Ready for Your Remote Hearing



Make sure you have a strong internet connection. If possible, test your connection ahead of time.



Either download the Zoom app or use your smartphone to access the Zoom.us webpage. Practice with the app or program so you feel comfortable.



Charge your computer or mobile device. If you are calling in by phone, make sure you have enough minutes or use a landline phone.



Use earbuds or headphones with a microphone, if you can. This frees up your hands and improves sound quality. Do NOT use speaker phone.



Tell the court if you have witnesses. The court will tell them how to join the hearing.

Get Your Space Ready



- Find a quiet place where people or pets won't disturb you.
- Have all your papers ready, including a list of what you want to say to the court.
- Know what time your hearing starts and how to log on or what number to call.



General Tips for Video Appearance

- Set the camera at eye level. If using your phone, prop it up so you don't have to hold it.
- Dress as you would to appear in court.
- Sit in a well-lit area with no bright lights or windows directly behind you.
- No smoking, eating, or driving during the hearing.



General Tips for Phone Appearance

- Make sure you are in a location with a reliable phone connection. Use a landline if able.
- Do not use Speakerphone. Earbuds or headphones with a microphone work well with cell phones.
- Press *6 to mute/unmute yourself.



Audio Tips

- If appearing by the Zoom app or website, be sure to connect audio by internet or select internet audio.
- Mute yourself when not speaking to improve sound quality.
- Speak slowly and do not interrupt.
- If you or any of your witnesses need language assistance services, contact the Clerk of Circuit Court as soon as possible.

What should I expect during the hearing?

- When you first join, you may be placed in a "waiting room", do not disconnect as the court will move you from the "waiting room" to the "hearing room."
- There may be a hearing before yours that goes long. Be patient and stay in the meeting until it begins.
- The court will make sure you can hear, be heard, and will go over all the rules.
- You will see a picture or name of each person in your hearing on your screen. If you are able, change the name on your picture to identify yourself. If not, the court may do this for you.
- Be aware that if your hearing is open to the public, it may be live-streamed to the public.

Need legal help?



More information for finding legal help can be found on the Wisconsin Law Library website (<http://wilawlibrary.gov/>) or the State Bar of Wisconsin website (www.wisbar.org).