

Court Appearances – Zoom

Generally, until the COVID-19 related governmental Orders and advisories have been lifted, we will not have any court hearings in person at the Courthouse. This is in accordance with the latest Orders and recommendations of the Texas Supreme Court, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, and the Office of Court Administration. Pursuant to such Orders and recommendations, this Court will utilize the Zoom platform for hearings, when feasible under the circumstances.

To appear by Zoom, you must have access to one of the following: a computer, a laptop, a tablet (such as an IPAD), or a smart phone. Your device must have a microphone, and it is best if it has a camera. It must have access to the internet. To attend a hearing by Zoom, go to <https://zoom.us>. If this is your first time to use Zoom on that device, you might be prompted to download the app from the APPStore – there is no charge for this app.

At the Zoom page, click “join.” (You may be asked “Open this page in “Zoom” and given the choice to Cancel or Open. Choose “Open”) Click “Join a Meeting” and at the “Join a Meeting” page, put in the Meeting ID: 945-078-1982. Click on “Join.” You can then select “Call using Internet Audio” [PREFERRED} or “Dial in.” In unusual cases, you will be notified by the Court of a different Meeting ID; in that event, use the ID given to you instead of the above referenced Meeting ID.

Zoom Protocol

When you join, you will be in the “Waiting room” and you will only be able to enter the virtual “courtroom” when the Judge brings you in. You cannot see or hear the proceedings from the waiting room. Like the Courtroom, only parties and litigants will be invited into the virtual courtroom (“inside the rail”). The Judge and/or the Court Coordinator will be able to see you are in the waiting room. Do not attempt to notify the court that you are in the waiting room.

If you elect to use video, you will be seen by the Judge and the other participants. You will be in a Courtroom, therefore please dress appropriately. Conduct yourself appropriately, using suitable language. Make sure your clients and witnesses also understand this.

Zoom allows only one person to talk at a time; do not talk when another person is talking. Be mindful that any background noise will cause problems with a Zoom hearing. You should try to mute yourself until it is your turn to speak. Muting can be done on the device you are using.

If an attorney needs to talk to a client privately, I can place them in a private breakout room where they cannot be seen or heard by others. Unless directed otherwise, your client can appear at your office and share a device with you; or they can appear by a separate device – in your office or from another location. The prerequisites for using Zoom and the login procedures are the same. Note that having two devices in close proximity may result in feedback problems.

If you have people who want to attend and see/hear the proceedings, they can

do so on YouTube on the “Steve Parkhurst” channel, where the proceedings will be live streamed. If they enter through Zoom, they will not be able to see or hear the proceedings.

This is exactly like being in the Courtroom. You are absolutely prohibited from making any audio or video recordings. This prohibition is enforceable by contempt of Court, carrying a possible punishment of fines and/or incarceration in jail.

LEARN HOW TO CHANGE YOUR SCREEN NAME TO YOUR REAL NAME. TELL YOUR CLIENTS THE SAME THING. I CANNOT RECOGNIZE YOU IN THE WAITING ROOM AND MOVE YOU TO THE COURTROOM WHEN YOUR NAME IS “IPAD” OR “OOPYDOOP4”