

Inyo Superior Court, Virtual Courtroom

Rules and Responsibilities

In response to the COVID-19 state of emergency and to provide access to the Court under shelter in place orders, Inyo Superior Court will conduct certain court calendars via ZOOM meeting. ZOOM meeting will accommodate both internet and phone-in appearances. If you do not have a computer or internet connection, you may phone-in using the phone number provided in the ZOOM link information.

The virtual courtroom, under the supervision of the Judge presiding, has the authority to exclude persons who fail to comply with the following Rules and Responsibilities.

1. **Be on time**

Please ensure all equipment is fully tested in advance so that you are ready when court starts. Inyo Superior Court is not responsible to provide technical assistance.

For detailed audio/video guidelines and troubleshooting: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362283-Testing-computer-or-device-audio>

If you experience echo-specific problems with your audio connection:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/202050538-Audio-Echo-In-A-Meeting>

2. **Properly introduce yourself**

When signing onto the virtual courtroom, please type your full name so that you can be properly identified.

If you make a mistake or are asked to fix your name, click on the *Participants* icon at the bottom of the Zoom window; hover over your name; click *More*; select *Rename*.

3. **Frame the camera correctly**

When you're on video make sure to:

- a. Frame your camera in a way that feels natural and allows you to look directly at the camera.
- b. Choose a spot where the background is courtroom appropriate and with no bright lights behind you.
- c. Always speak into the computer microphone and do not get up and walk around during hearings.
- d. Turn your camera off unless actively participating in a hearing. This will reduce the number of concurrent participants on the screen.

4. **Wear Court-appropriate attire**

All persons who appear by Zoom shall dress appropriately as if they were appearing in person in a traditional courtroom setup. The following shall not be worn while appearing via Zoom: sunglasses, hats, tank tops, or any other attire inconsistent with the traditional dignity of the court.

5. **Roll call and waiting room**

At the beginning of each calendar, the Courtroom Clerk will admit all attendees into the virtual courtroom to take roll. After this is completed, you will be returned to the waiting room until your case is called. There are several cases on calendar for the same date and time, and it is likely that your case will not be called at the exact time it is scheduled. Please be patient during this time. The Clerk and the Judge know you are present and will not proceed without you.

6. **Mute yourself when not speaking**
Even though you may not be speaking and think you are being quiet, most microphones (including phones) can pick up minor background noises, like coughs, sneezes, paper handling, or typing. These sounds can easily distract other participants, including the court reporter who might not be able to properly transcribe the proceeding.
Note: by default, Zoom virtual courtrooms are set to mute all participants on entry.
7. **Let everybody know who is speaking**
In the virtual courtroom it is very important that participants know who is talking. Please start speaking by **stating your name, and then speak slowly and as clearly as you can**. This will help the Judge, Clerk, Court Reporter, and everyone else to understand what you are saying.
8. **No recording or broadcasting allowed**
Photographing, videotaping, televising, or otherwise recording any virtual court proceeding is prohibited unless a written request has been filed and approved by the Judge presiding at the proceeding prior to the commencement of the proceeding. No one may transmit, record, or take pictures in any portion of the Zoom session except as permitted by these rules and Rule 1.150 of the California Rules of Court.
9. **Sidebar conversations**
 - a. **Remote participants**
In case two or more parties need to communicate directly, without others involved, the host can place those participants in a **Zoom Breakout Room**. Breakout room participants have full audio, video, and screen share capabilities as they do in the main meeting.
 - b. **Non-remote participants**
If any of the sidebars involves a participant who is physically present in the courtroom, the off-the-record conversation cannot take place. All audio is fed through the courtroom equipment, making it impossible to segment each party involved.