

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND
FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA

DIVISION: B

STANDING ORDER FOR THE CONDUCT
OF EVIDENTIARY VIDEO CONFERENCE HEARINGS

Until further order of the Court, the following procedures shall apply to all evidentiary hearings conducted by video conferencing:

1. Prior to any video conference hearing, all attorneys and pro se parties shall familiarize themselves with the operation of Zoom and its capabilities. Instructions on Zoom operation may be found at <https://zoom.us/resources>. The following procedure will be followed:

a. Enter your name on your Zoom profile so that you can be identified by the judge.

b. Devices must be fully charged prior to the hearing with a charger accessible in the event it becomes necessary.

c. Devices must remain muted unless the participant is speaking. All participants must be in a location that is free of extraneous noise or visual distraction.

d. Virtual background is not permitted.

e. Hearings are court proceedings. Appropriate courtroom attire for attorneys, parties and witnesses is expected.

2. Witness Testimony

a. At least three business days prior to hearing, the parties shall e-mail to the court a list of all witnesses expected to be called, with full names, e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers. Real names must be used. Court reporters are meeting participants. If a court reporter will be present, the reporter's name and e-mail address shall be provided along with the witness list.

b. After any opening statements, when a witness is called, the judge will admit the witness from the waiting room. After testifying, the witness will be removed electronically from the hearing.

c. Witnesses must be alone. Prior to testifying and after testifying, witnesses shall scan the room to confirm they are the only person in the room. However, if an interpreter is necessary, interpreters may be either in the room with a witness or a meeting participant. The parties'

list of witnesses should indicate whether a witness will be testifying through an interpreter. The interpreter's name and e-mail address must be provided to the judge in the list of witnesses.

d. Passing of electronic notes during testimony and recording of the proceedings are forbidden.

e. All other electronic devices must be turned off.

f. An attorney and a party may be in the same room. However, the camera must capture both. No one else may be present in the room.

3. Exhibits

a. At least five days prior to hearing, the attorneys (or pro se parties) shall confer to disclose exhibits expected to be used and to stipulate to as many as possible.

b. All exhibits must be delivered, e-mailed to the judge or e-filed at least three business days prior to the hearing. They should be pre-marked, identifying the party and exhibit number. Exhibits over ten pages in number of pages shall be either delivered to the judge or e-filed in searchable PDF format with computer-generated page numbers. The parties must also provide an index which includes the number of pages in each exhibit.


c. All attorneys, the judge and the court reporter must have a copy of all exhibits. Witnesses must have a copy of all exhibits to which they will testify or for which they will lay the predicate for admission.

d. Exhibits can be shared during the video hearing using shared screen on Zoom.

4. Sanctions

Failure to comply with these requirements may subject the non-compliant party to sanctions, which may include exclusion of witness testimony or an exhibit.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers, at Green Cove Springs, Clay County, Florida, this 6th day of May, 2020.



Don H. Lester
Circuit Judge