

SAN PATRICIO COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 2 PROTOCOLS FOR ELECTRONIC APPEARANCE

YOUR CASE HAS BEEN SET FOR AN ELECTRONIC HEARING BEFORE THE SAN PATRICIO COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 2, via the Zoom Meetings App. Failure to appear in the manner directed may result in sanctions being imposed, including your claims being denied, claims against you being granted, monetary sanctions or fines being assessed, issuance of a warrant or *capias*, and granting of a final default judgment or dismissal.

To appear electronically, a court participant must follow these instructions:

First, you must create a free Zoom account. Download and install the free Zoom client on your computer or tablet from the [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us) website by hovering over the Resources tab, and selecting “Download Zoom Client,” or on your smart phone by installing Zoom from the App Store. **You must sign-in using your real name.** Logging in using a pseudonym, fake name, or other identifier may result in you not being admitted to the virtual courtroom and deemed not to have appeared, or in your case being moved to the end of docket, thus increasing your wait time.


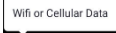
Because the Zoom app works on all modern smart phones, tablets and computers, each participant is expected to appear *by video*, rather than merely by voice.

Attorneys must appear on camera during hearings, and shall dress in traditional courtroom attire. All other participants shall dress appropriately for court. Hats and sunglasses must be removed. Persons dressed inappropriately may be excluded from the hearing.

Only counsel of record, litigants and their spouses (where specifically permitted by the rules), testifying experts, and witnesses while testifying will be permitted to enter the hearing. Witnesses will remain in the waiting room until it is their turn to testify. Witnesses who are not on camera to be placed under oath will not be permitted to testify.

All virtual hearings in this Court are open for public viewing. Recording, downloading or capturing video, audio, or images of the electronic proceeding or live stream is prohibited.

Instructions for Participating Electronically in the Zoom Virtual Courtroom:

1. Join the virtual courtroom a few minutes before the scheduled hearing time by clicking the link in the order or e-vite, or <https://app.zconnect.io/r/ACL5GI>. If it asks you whether to open in the browser or open the Zoom app, always instruct it to open in the Zoom app. When you enter, select “Join Audio”  then “WiFi or Cellular Data,”  even if you are connecting via smart phone. If you enter and you can't hear anyone else in the meeting when you see them speaking, verify in the call audio settings that you are connected to “Wifi or Cellular Data.”
2. Upon entering the room, your video will automatically be activated and your audio muted, until the hearing begins. If you are having trouble connecting, contact the court representative at 361-587-3418 for assistance.
3. You must be in a quiet, well-lit area, preferably indoors, with minimal background noise. You will not be permitted to participate from a moving vehicle or a crowded

- public place. Be positioned so that there is no window or bright light source behind you or visible within the video frame. If your location or environment renders your participation impossible or untenable, or interferes with the Court's ability to conduct its proceedings, you may be excluded from the hearing.
4. When you first connect, you will remain in a virtual waiting room until your case is called. There may be other cases set at the same time as yours. Do not disconnect or exit the waiting room while you are waiting. The court can see that you are in the waiting room. Please do not call the court to let the court know you are waiting. When your case is reached, the Court will bring you and the other participants into the virtual courtroom.
 5. During the hearing, you may "slip notes" between client and lawyer, using the private chat feature. To do so, hit the "Chat" button at the bottom of the Zoom screen, and at the bottom of the Chat window, pull-down the recipient arrow and select your client's or lawyer's name. Be careful – chat messages sent to "Everyone" will be visible to all meeting participants, including the Court. Do not send private messages to the Court, the other party, or any witness. You are strongly encouraged to practice with this feature prior to joining the hearing. You are not to send messages to anyone other than your attorney or client during the proceeding.
 6. While a witness is testifying, they shall not communicate with anyone else by any means. Do not refer to or look at any documents or items while testifying unless directed to do so by the Court. This includes web searches and written documentation. Your hands should be empty.
 7. The Rule as to Witnesses is invoked in every hearing in the virtual courtroom. Do not communicate with witnesses by any means while the hearing is underway, or allow or encourage them to watch the live-stream during the hearing. Witnesses who watch the live-stream or violate the Rule will not be permitted to testify.
 8. You may, upon request, meet privately with your client or attorney during a hearing. If your request is granted by the Court, you will be moved into a confidential breakout room to confer with your lawyer for a few moments. When you see the invitation to join the breakout room, you must click JOIN.

Additional instructions and admonishments may be given to you by the Court during the hearing.

PRESIDING JUDGE