**Tips For Phone and Zoom Civil Protection Order Hearings**

King County Superior Court allows parties to appear remotely or in person for their civil protection order hearings. If you choose to appear remotely you may do so via phone or video. The Court will have a zoom link for your specific hearing. Your temporary order or reissued order will have instructions on how to access the hearing.

**In Advance** of the hearing:



Make sure you know how you will join the hearing. Consider testing beforehand.

If you have time and want to observe hearings before your court date, you may. This will help you to know what to expect for your hearing date. When you check in, the Court Coordinator will ask if you are a party to a case and you may share that you are observing. If you are observing, it is important to make sure you are on mute and your camera is off.



Request an interpreter if you need one. You have the right to interpreter services at no cost to you. Contact the court before your hearing to ask for an interpreter.



Request an accommodation for a disability that limits your ability to take part in the remote hearing. Contact your court before the hearing to make this request.



If you are using your phone to appear at the hearing, make sure it is adequately charged.

If you are working with an advocate, they may be able to have a practice Zoom conversation with you to help you become more comfortable with this technology. This is something a friend or family member may be able to assist with as well.



Self-care to prepare. This is a stressful day that may involve lots of waiting. Plan around what you can do for yourself before and after the hearing.

Know what to expect.If you are coming to court to provide testimony, consider what is most important for the court to hear and for you to share. Some people find it helpful to take notes during the hearing to prepare their response.

**Just Before** the Hearing



Try to find somewhere with good connection, that’s quiet and private to be on Zoom. If you have kids, make sure you are not near them. If you have pets that may become distracting or loud, make sure they are in another room. Put a sign on the door if needed.



If you are concerned about safety, make sure there is nothing identifiable in your video or audio background during the hearing.



Join the hearing a few minutes early if you can. This can be a time to test the audio, microphone and video settings.



Gather your court papers, notes you prepared, and a paper and pen.



Check how to mute and unmute on zoom. This is important. During the hearing, you should mute the line when it is not your turn to talk, but you will want to quickly unmute when it is your turn. Sometimes you will have to mute and unmute many times during a hearing.



The Court will ask all parties to keep their cameras off until their case is called.



If you plan to attend the hearing virtually from your car, make sure you are pulled over and in a safe location.

**During** a phone or zoom hearing

When you first join, listen to see what is happening. Some hearings will have multiple people on the line. Your case may not be the only case. The hearing host (typically the Court Coordinator) may be able to identify that you have joined the hearing. Other hearing hosts will ask everyone to identify themselves before the hearing starts.



Direct all your statements and answers to the judge, not the other person. When it is your turn to talk, talk slowly and loudly so the Court can hear you clearly.

On phone and video calls, it can be hard to know when it is your turn to talk. Try very hard not to interrupt anyone, even if the other person is saying something that you don’t agree with or that is not true. Never interrupt the judge. But, you can ask the court if you have questions. Without interrupting anyone, say, “Your honor, may I say something.”



If you do not understand something the Court has said or asked, ask for clarification.

**Some additional tips** for Zoom hearings

When you first log in you may see a message such as “Please wait for the host to start the meeting.” This is normal and the hearing should start close to the scheduled time. If the hearing has still not started 5 minutes after the scheduled time you may want to contact the court (this information will be on your court order) or the Protection Order Advocacy Program. protectionorder@kingcounty.gov



When you first log in you may notice “Courtroom Rules & Etiquette” on the screen. A Court Coordinator will likely check in with you shortly.



Dress neatly. You should dress as if you were appearing in person for court.



Place your computer’s camera at, or slightly above, eye level. If using your phone, prop it up so you can look at it without holding it.

Try not to have a messy background behind you. If you are concerned about safety, use a video filter to blur or change your video background.

Use a chair that supports good posture and is comfortable.



Face the camera, not the computer screen.



Courtroom etiquette still applies even though you are in another physical location. During your hearing do not drink, eat, smoke or drive.



The chat feature is for parties to communicate with the Court Coordinator only.