

**MIFFLIN COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS "ZOOM" HEARING
PROTOCOL**

YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE MIFFLIN COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS, VIA THE ZOOM MEETING APP. You must follow these instructions and appear for your hearing. Failure to appear may result in your claims being denied, or opposing claims granted against you, up to and including a default judgment.

First, visit zoom.us and create an account. **You must use your real name in setting up your Zoom account.** You should also download and install the app on your computer, tablet and/or smart phone. (You can do this by clicking Resources, and selecting Install Client or App). If you cannot figure out how to do it, just remember this -- when you attempt to host or join a meeting, it will ask you whether to open in the browser or open/install the Zoom app. *Instruct it to open in the Zoom app and allow it to install the program.* You may, in the alternative, use the call-in information with a voice call, but while you will be permitted to participate, you will not be permitted to testify under oath unless you appear in camera in Zoom.

Witnesses who are not on camera will not be permitted to testify.

Dress Code:

Parties and witnesses are expected to be dressed as if this was an in-person proceeding. It is incumbent upon you to ensure that your witnesses are properly dressed. You and your witnesses should be fully clothed and in appropriate attire (for example, pajamas are not appropriate for a video conference hearing).

Participating in the Zoom Virtual Courtroom:

1. You will join the virtual courtroom at the scheduled time by navigating to Zoom.us and selecting Join a Meeting. You will enter the Meeting ID followed by the Passcode provided to you on your scheduling order.
2. When you join a virtual setting, you will be appear in a virtual waiting room with all other parties, attorneys and witnesses. There may be several cases set on the docket at that time. When your case is called, the court will bring you into the virtual courtroom.
3. Because the Zoom app works on all modern smart phones, tablets and computers, each attorney is expected to appear by video, rather than merely by voice.
4. When you enter the virtual courtroom, your video will automatically be on and your audio muted, until the hearing begins.

5. Hearings will be on the record through the use of the official court reporter.
6. Witnesses will be called as in any case, and the court will bring them in one at a time from the waiting room. Remember, only people on video will be permitted to testify unless they are in the physical presence of a notary public.
7. You may "slip notes" to your lawyer, using the private chat feature. To do so, hit the "CHAT" button, and at the bottom of the chat window, pull-down the recipient arrow and select your lawyer's name. However, you are not to communicate with your lawyer or anyone else while you are testifying. You are also prohibited from using the chat feature to communicate with witnesses. Witnesses are only permitted in the virtual courtroom while they are testifying. You are not to hold notes or paperwork in your hands while testifying, just as though you were on the witness stand.
8. You may, upon request, confer in private with your attorney. You should "slip a note" via chat feature to your lawyer, request a moment to confer. If your request is granted by the court, you will be moved into a confidential video room to confer for a few moments.
9. Exhibits and plea papers must be submitted to exhibits@mifflinco.org. Exhibits need to be submitted forty-eight (48) hours prior to your proceeding. Exhibits not sent by at least 4:00 p.m. the day before your proceeding may not be accepted. Additionally, the judicial law clerks will not be sharing the exhibits with anyone until they are admitted during the proceeding, at which time, the judicial law clerks will give the exhibits to the Judge and the court reporter.
10. All exhibits should be named in this format: The county initials "MC" followed by the case number followed by the initial for your party (P for Plaintiff, D for Defendant, C for Commonwealth) and finally followed by the number of the exhibit. For example: MC 123-20 P 1. Evidence not anticipated or submitted prior to the hearing may be submitted during the hearing through the chat/file feature in Zoom. However, just as in person proceedings, the Court will not be looking at text messages or emails that are on a party's phone. If a party is anticipating needing a text message from their phone, it should be prepared as an exhibit, just as it would be in an in person proceeding.

Additional instructions will be given to you by the Court during the hearing.

So ordered.

President Judge Barron