



In the Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri DIVISION 25 – Judge Jessica Agnelly

Tips for Effective Participation in Conferences and Hearings Using Telephone and Video Conferencing

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced courts around the country to make significant changes to the way they function so they can continue to perform their obligation to effectively and fairly administer justice – and do it safely. One of these changes is the increased use of telephone and video conferencing technology for certain conferences and hearings and to temporarily prohibit or limit the use of in-person proceedings. While the expansion of the use of these technologies is a result of current events, it is likely that courts will continue to use them as tools in the future where appropriate.

In using these methods of conducting hearings, the court has observed what enables them to be used effectively, and what can limit their effectiveness. Obviously, everyone participating in one of these proceedings is in a different circumstance. Some may be working remotely from home or elsewhere. Some may not have a “home office” free of small children or pets needing attention. Some may not have reliable access to computers, cell phones, or an internet connection. Keeping this in mind, the court has prepared these general guidelines with a view toward assisting attorneys and parties. Please contact Division 25 with any questions or concerns at div25.cir16@court.mo.gov or (816) 881-3679.

General

- Attorneys and self-represented parties need to provide the court with their most updated contact information, including a street address, telephone number, and e-mail address. While court rules only require the providing of an e-mail address in certain circumstances, everyone participating in the court process should make every effort to obtain an email address and provide it. It is the primary and most efficient method of communicating with attorneys and self-represented litigants and – in the case of the court’s video conferencing tool – is the best way to receive instructions for logging into and participating in the proceedings.
- Frequently check the status of your case via Case.net, utilize Case.net’s “Track this Case” feature, check the court’s website at www.16thcircuit.org, and check each Division’s

webpage (the Division 25 webpage is located at <https://www.16thcircuit.org/division-25-judge-jessica-agnelly>.) Through the “Track this Case” feature, parties to a case can sign up to receive alerts regarding the filing of pleadings, entry of court orders, and scheduling of conferences and hearings. Instructions on utilizing this feature are attached and can also be found on the court’s webpage. Notices regarding the manner in which conferences and hearings will be conducted can often be found on the Division’s webpage.

- Contact the court’s staff with any questions regarding any particular Division’s policies and procedures. Their contact information is on the Division’s webpage.
- During both telephone and video proceedings, make sure to speak up, speak clearly, and speak one at a time. Most of these proceedings will be on the record, and we need to be able to record everyone. Speaking over one another during one of these conferences or hearings often results in nobody being heard. It is also helpful, especially in phone calls, for speakers to identify themselves before speaking, and for witnesses being asked questions to pause before answering to give an attorney an opportunity to object or the court to otherwise interject.
- Before telephone and video hearings, provide any exhibits, motions, or judgments to the law clerk or judicial administrative assistants. The best way to do this is to provide scanned copies via e-mail to the law clerk or the court’s judicial administrative assistants, or you can fax them to (816) 881-1404. You can also file documents in your case at Civil Records on the 3rd floor of the Courthouse, or you can deposit them in the drop box provided at the West entrance to the Courthouse. If you choose to file through Civil Records or the drop box, please do this at least three (3) days before your hearing to give your filings time to reach the Division.

Telephone Conferences/Hearings

- Division 25 has a toll free phone number and an access code which will enable you to dial in to the conference or hearing. To participate in a Division 25 hearing by telephone, you must call **888-363-4735** and then follow the prompts to enter access code **2911182**. It is best to dial in five minutes before the scheduled time as, with increased use of teleconferencing in the last few months, users have occasionally been told that “all circuits are busy” when they try to dial into a call. The court will be the host of the call so if you dial in before the court, you will be on hold waiting for the court to join the conference. If you are disconnected for any reason, you will need to call in again.
- Try to use a land line as opposed to a cell phone when possible. Try to find a quiet place inside from which to participate in the call that has few background noises. Children, pets, televisions and radios, fans, traffic, wind, and other outdoor noises are some examples of background distractions that can affect everyone’s ability to hear you.
- You will be asked to MUTE your phone while you wait for your case to be called.
- When your conference or hearing is concluded, you can hang up.

Video Conferences/Hearings

- The court utilizes WebEx by Cisco for its videoconferences. Many of the suggestions above regarding finding as quiet a place as possible, etc., apply to video proceedings as well. You will need a computer that has a camera and microphone, or you can use a smart phone that has these features. Follow the instructions that are provided to you with your notice of hearing or find the instructions on Division 25's webpage.
- If you are participating from a computer, you will be instructed to run the WebEx program. If you are participating from a cell phone, you will be asked to download the WebEx app in order to join the meeting. The app is free.
- If you are in a proceeding with many participants present, please mute yourself until it is your turn to talk to reduce background noise, feedback, etc. **IMPORTANT – unless you mute your connection or turn off your video, YOU WILL BE HEARD AND SEEN BY THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS AT ALL TIMES.**
- Be mindful of your surroundings and background. Dress appropriately as though you were attending an in-person hearing in the courtroom. When you see yourself during the conference, make sure your computer is situated so you can be seen clearly and completely.
- Make sure you have as strong a connection to the Internet as possible. If you are participating from a computer, consider whether you can use a “wired” connection to your internet router instead of a “wireless” connection. In addition, close any other applications on your computer or phone.

“Track Your Case” Instructions

1. Go to Missouri Case.net
<https://www.courts.mo.gov/casenet>
2. Select “**Search for Cases by Case Number**” and enter your case number
3. Select “**Track this Case**”
4. Provide your e-mail address and mobile phone number if you want to receive text alerts (text alerts optional)
5. Click on the applicable “**Notice Option**” to receive reminders of your court date/scheduled payments
6. Enter the special characters in the verification box
7. Click on “**Track this Case**”*

**Information Provided is
Not an Official Court Record*

General WebEx Information

This Court is now using Cisco's WebEx platform as a means to host its dockets. Each person will need to log into Division 25's "Personal Room" on WebEx to join the docket. Parties will be able to access the Personal room by computer or cell phone app. It is very helpful to have a strong Internet or Wi-Fi connection to improve your access to the Personal room. All individuals are instructed to access the Personal room at least 5-10 minutes before the scheduled hearing as the Court will start calling cases promptly at the scheduled hearing time. Instructions on how to access the Personal room are below. The Court will be hearing multiple cases, so please expect to wait until your case is called. Please mute your microphone while waiting for your case to be called.

It is also possible to connect to the Division's Personal room by calling in. However, it is a long distance phone call, and fees do apply. As a result, the Court prefers not to use this option. If after reading these instructions you would prefer to participate in your hearing via telephone call, please contact Division 25 at 816-881-3679 or div25.cir16@courts.mo.gov.

Connecting to Division 25's Personal Room via WebEx

There two different ways to access Division 25's Personal Room via WebEx: (A) mobile app or (B) computer. Please review each method before determining which works best for you.

(A) Mobile App

1. Download the free "Cisco WebEx Meetings" app from your app store and open the app.
2. Click on green button that says "Join Meeting".
3. Enter:
<https://mocourts.webex.com/meet/div25chambers> in the "Meeting Number or URL" space. Fill in the next spaces with your Personal information. Please use your full name so the Court can identify you. Click enter.
4. Allow the app to have access to your microphone and camera when prompted.
5. The next page will take you to Division 25's "Personal Room." Mute your microphone by clicking the microphone icon until it is red. Click "Join Meeting."
6. After joining, you may be taken to the waiting room. You will be invited by Judge Agnelly to the hearing when the docket starts.

Using the mobile app to connect to the hearing does require connection to the Internet. It is not clear how much data will be used while waiting and throughout the hearing.

(B) Computer

1. Enter:
<https://mocourts.webex.com/meet/div25chambers> in your browser's address bar.
2. You will be asked to enter your name and email address. It is important to include your full name so the Court can identify you when your case is called. Click "Join Meeting."
3. Next you will be prompted in some form to download the WebEx program. Download the program.
4. Once the program is finished downloading, a new window should open. Make sure the round icon that looks like a microphone is red and the one that looks like a camera is green. If one of the features is not available, it will appear gray. Click "Join Meeting."
5. After joining, you may be taken to the waiting room. You will be invited into the video hearing by Judge Agnelly when your case is called.
6. Please unmute your phone only when your case is called.