



JUDICIAL CHAMBERS
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
FIFTY-NINTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA
ELK COUNTY CAMERON COUNTY

LIFESIZE VIRTUAL PROCEEDING PROTOCOL

YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF THE 59th JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, ELK AND CAMERON COUNTIES, VIA THE LIFESIZE MEETING APP. You must follow these instructions and appear for your hearing/argument/conference. Failure to appear may result in your claims being denied, or opposing claims granted against you, up to and including a default judgment.

First, you should download the Lifesize app on your computer, tablet, and/or smart phone. To do this, you can visit www.lifesize.com. The Court will provide the Meeting ID for your proceeding. A free account is not necessary, however, you will need to download and install the app on your computer, tablet and/or smartphone. If you attempt to join a proceeding without previously having installed the app on your computer, tablet and/or smartphone, Lifesize will force you to download the app before you can participate. This will cause undue delay to your proceeding if the app is not installed prior to your proceeding.

Only those who are visible on camera will be permitted to testify. Lifesize does not allow for telephone participation only, however, participants have the ability to participate by audio only. This is not optimal and should be avoided.

You must use your real name, first and last, when signing in.

As this is an official court proceeding, you should be in a location that offers privacy and is free of background noise and distractions.

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).

Instructions

1. For each scheduled court proceeding, you will receive a court order providing a Meeting ID. You will join the Virtual Courtroom by entering the Meeting ID at the scheduled time. Only counsel or self-represented parties will receive orders from the Court. It is incumbent upon you to forward the details to your clients and witnesses and inform them of the login information. Login information shall not be posted in any online forum so as to minimize the possibility of an unauthorized participant gaining access to the proceeding.

Counsel, parties and witnesses must login with the real first and last name for each proceeding for ease of identification.

2. As with traditional proceedings, there is a possibility that the proceeding before yours runs longer than expected. In that circumstance, you may receive notification that “The Meeting is Locked” when you attempt to join. This means that the proceeding before yours is still in progress. You should wait, instead of sign-out, and you will be permitted access to the proceeding as soon as the Court is available.
3. The Lifesize app works on all modern smartphones, tablets and computers. Each attorney is expected to appear by video rather than by voice alone.
4. Hearings will be on the record through the use of the court reporter. Arguments and conferences are not on the record.
5. Lifesize does not have a virtual waiting room, so witnesses will be in the Virtual Courtroom for the duration of the proceeding. Only people on video will be permitted to testify. Witnesses are not to hold notes or paperwork in their hand while testifying, just as though they were on the witness stand.
6. Lifesize does not have a private chat or breakout room.
7. Exhibits and plea papers must be submitted to the official court reporter. If your hearing is in front of President Judge McMahon, Senior Judge or juvenile master, you will submit your exhibits to srs.reporting@yahoo.com. Exhibits must be sent to the Court and opposing counsel no less than forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing. If extraordinary circumstances prohibit submission 48 hours before, exhibits not sent by at least 3:30 p.m. the business day before your proceeding may not be accepted. Additionally, the court reporter will not be sharing the exhibits with anyone until they are admitted during the proceeding at which time the court reporter will give the exhibits to the judge or juvenile master.
8. All exhibits should be named in this format: The county initials "EC" followed by the case number followed by the initial for the party (P for plaintiff, D for defendant, C for Commonwealth) and finally followed by the number of the exhibit. For example: EC 2020-123 P1. However, just as in-person proceedings, the Court will not be looking at text messages or e-mails 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.

The Court understands this process seems complicated; however, the Court believes you will find that all of our comfort levels will grow quickly with each proceeding we handle virtually. These instructions are subject to change as we grow in our knowledge of this video conference platform. The Court appreciates your flexibility and willingness to adapt to this new reality. Should you have any questions or need clarification on these instructions, do not hesitate to reach out to Court Administration for additional help.

Hon. Shawn T. McMahon, President Judge