

TIFT COUNTY STATE COURT

Preparing to Participate in a Zoom Court Session

Important: Any recording of a court proceeding held by video or teleconference, including “screen-shots” or other visual copying of a hearing, is prohibited absent permission from the Judge. See [Uniform Superior Court Rule 22](#). Violation of these prohibitions may result in sanctions, including removal of court-issued media credentials, restricted entry to future hearings, denial of entry to future hearing, or any other sanctions deemed necessary by the court.

If you will be a case participant in a Zoom conference with the court (i.e., an attorney, witness, case party, etc.), please follow the guidance below, as adequate preparation and testing of the system will help ensure a good experience of everyone involved. Case participants will receive login information directly from the court. Participant login information is not public and must not be shared with anyone other than the appearing attorneys and other direct participants in the court proceeding.

For security and enforcement of court standards, the court may disable some Zoom interactions (such as chat, screen share, whiteboard, Q&A, raise hand, react, etc.). Generally, the court will not provide technical support for Zoom participants. Please contact the Zoom Help Center, your local IT support, or other online guidance. If there are questions for the court, please do so prior to the hearing.

Zoom Account and Software

1. Participants: If you do not already have a Zoom account, set one up at <https://zoom.us>. A paid Zoom account is not necessary for any interaction with the court.
2. Log into <https://zoom.us/profile> and set your name, phone number and email. Including a photo on this page will help identify you when connecting.
3. Consider installing the latest Zoom Client for Meetings at <https://zoom.us/download>. Although Zoom can be used in a browser only, it is very limited. The full Zoom client is required for best functionality and best experience with the system.

Settings

Zoom has a lot of settings, and as the system updates, certain aspects or features may change. Below are a few settings recommended by the court to improve your video conference.

- General: Ask me to confirm when I leave a meeting – ON (This setting helps prevent unintended departures)
- Video: Always display participant names on their video – ON

Learning

The court will likely use only the audio and video functionality of Zoom. Other functions such as text chat, reactions, gestures and polling will likely be disabled for your session, and you need only learn the basics of observing or participating in a Zoom Meeting by audio or video. However, the court will utilize a “waiting room” where you will be until the meeting starts. The court may also utilize breakout rooms for attorneys and clients to communicate privately on recesses and prior to the start of the hearing. Consult the following sources to learn how to select the correct audio and video source, how to mute/unmute your audio, how to Start/Stop your video, and how to utilize a breakout room:

1. Audio and Video: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/201137166>
2. Learn how to easy mute/unmute the Push to talk: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360000510003-Using-push-to-talk>

3. Breakout Rooms: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005769646-Participating-in-meeting-breakout-rooms>
4. Screen Sharing: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362153-Sharing-your-screen-or-desktop-on-Zoom>

Recommendations

1. Mute your phone and mute all sounds from all other applications (email notifications, chat messaging, etc.).
2. Avoid using a mobile device if possible. Although tablets (iPads) and smartphones can be used, the experience on those devices can be difficult especially in longer hearings with documents.
3. Avoid using battery power only (laptops, etc.). Plug into a good power source while in a Zoom meeting.
4. Unless you've confirmed the quality is sufficient, avoid using an open microphone and speakers, such as those that are built-into laptops or webcams. Using a good quality headset (headphones with mic) will often help ensure you can be heard and can hear other with maximum quality.
5. Avoid noisy and echoing locations. Use a headset will improve audio quality when this is unavoidable.
6. Avoid distracting real or virtual backgrounds. Suitable example: <https://explore.zoom.us/en/virtual-backgrounds/>
7. Avoid poor camera positioning (if possible). Try to frame yourself so you take up most of the screen, at eye level.
8. Avoid running any unnecessary applications besides Zoom, to conserve your computer's processing power and networking.

Before Every Court Session using Zoom

1. Connect your device to power.
2. Make sure your internet connection is good.
3. Test your video.
4. Test your audio.
5. Turn off all audio disruptions.
6. Run a quick test to connect with another Zoom user, or use the Zoom test: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115002262083-Joining-a-Zoom-test-meeting>
7. Ensure your profile is named with your first and last name. John Doe should appear as "John Doe" and not "J's iPad". This will help the court identify who to bring into the meeting and who to leave in the waiting room. To rename yourself permanently, do that in your Zoom profile settings. If you forgot to do so and the meeting has begun, hover over your name in the participant box and click rename.
8. Be ready and in the meeting waiting room a few minutes before the scheduled start time.

Zoom Meeting Information

All information necessary to connect to a zoom meeting involving the Court will be provided by the Court's Administrative Assistant, Suzanne Griffin. She may be contacted at 229-386-7921 or by email at suzanne.griffin@tifftcounty.org no later than the day before the scheduled hearing.