

Zoom To Success

How to get the most
value out of your
Zoom hearings.

Even before the COVID-19 global pandemic, Zoom and similar technologies were being used with increasing frequency for virtual meetings. Now, with the blossoming wave of businesses and courts shifting to remote operations virtual meeting technologies like Zoom are key tools to successful operations.

This e-pamphlet is designed to help our clients Zoom to Success

It is important to know that you are participating in formal court proceedings and should behave in that manner. We understand that this is new, and we are all learning, but treating every zoom hearing like you are walking into a courtroom will show respect and dedication to your case.

Pre-Zoom Considerations:

- **Confirm date and time for your Zoom hearing**
- **Are you using a laptop, desktop computer, smartphone, or tablet? Planning out what type of device you will be utilizing for you hearing will help you set your scene effectively.**
- **Do you have an internet connection fast enough to support Zoom software? You will need a minimum of 600 Kbps (a mere 0.6 Mbps) download speeds to make one-on-one video calls on Zoom. The company's website recommends a minimum 1 Mbps download speed for group calls Check you internet speed at www.speedtest.com**
- **Do not rely on your laptop's battery. If you are using a laptop, have it connected to a charging port. Video conferencing can drain your battery**
- **Are your speakers, microphone, or webcam all working properly and synced with your Zoom software? In Zoom's Preference's is an "Audio" tab where you can test the mic and speakers and a "Video" tab where you can test the lighting and composition. I suggest checking these settings before every hearing.**
- **Do not update Zoom or your OS immediately prior to a hearing. Yes, it is a good idea to keep Zoom updated, but I've had updates take a long time to download and install, I've had updates mess with settings, and I've had updates fail and leave me having to uninstall and reinstall Zoom. Same goes for operating system updates. Just leave them until after your meetings**

Tips and tricks for your best presentation:

Attire:

It is very important that we maintain the same decorum, formality, and respect for the court just as if we were in the actual courtroom. Business attire is always appropriate for court. You should dress as though you are physically at the Court House presenting yourself to the Judge. Sweatshirts, gym clothes, t-shirts, jerseys, and pajamas are never acceptable for court. Men should wear a long-sleeved button-down shirt and tie with dress pants. Do not wear jeans, sandals, or colorful or dirty running shoes. Women could wear either pants or a skirt. Tops could include a blouse, a nice knit shirt, or a sweater. Avoid sleeveless shirts, low necklines, jeans, t-shirts, and other casual clothing. If you choose pants to wear to court, be sure that they are dress pants and not leggings, capris, or yoga pants.

Lighting:

Avoid backlight from bright windows. Do not sit with your back to a window. You should have light directed at your face so that you can be seen clearly. Also be aware that your screen can be a large source of light, so adjust your screen brightness, too, especially if you are taking a call without natural light. A bright screen can blow the highlights on your face out, making you look more washed out than a Zoom hearing champion.

Sound:

You do not want to be so close to the camera that you cause distortion but, don't be so far away that the microphone won't hear you. Remember to find a peaceful quiet place away from distractions. And, don't forget to mute the microphone when listening.

Get Comfortable:

It is important to remember that when you're a zoom hearing **you are in court**. Once you join a call you should not be getting up and moving around. You should not leave your hearing without express permission from the Judge. **Do not interrupt court proceedings to ask to use the bathroom**, instead wait for a recess. Start with a comfortable place to sit or stand for a long period of time.

Positioning your Camera:

Position your camera angle so you are not too close or too far away and you are centered in the screen, at about eye level. A good rule of thumb is to position your head, so it is about an inch or so from the top of your screen.

Example: how to lift your webcam without equipment



Higher is better than lower. Make sure your webcam is mounted high enough. This way you will be looking straight ahead, your position will feel more natural, and you will not be as overbearing to the other members of your hearing. Ideally, your camera will be looking straight at you or even slightly downward, so elevate your camera before your Zoom meeting to make the camera work for you!

You don't want to be looking down at your camera. This will make you seem imposing and unapproachable. Position your camera at eye level.

You should position the view of yourself directly underneath your webcam. It is human nature to want to look at ourselves when on screen, we cannot help it. This position of your view will prevent you from looking away from your webcam and make it look like you're maintaining eye contact.



- It can be hard to remember, but this is very important: try to look at your camera not at the person you are **Zooming with**. When you look directly into your camera, it will appear, on the other end of your meeting, that you are looking into the eyes of whomever you're Zooming with.
- **Make sure your video window is on the top of your screen:** Many people keep their video window on the lower right corner of the screen. This is a huge mistake because your gaze is there, so the people on the other end of the meeting will think that you are constantly looking down.

Background:



- The court is not just seeing you; they are seeing everything behind you as well. Dirty clothes in a pile, an unmade bed, and so forth give the impression that you are not taking this process seriously. No trash, messy areas, inappropriate art collections, or inappropriate pictures should be visible in your camera's view.

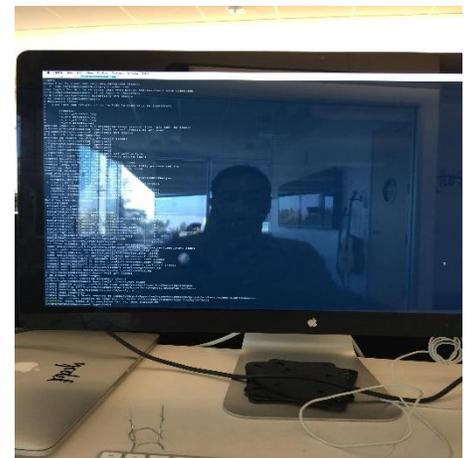
The background of your Zoom hearing should be calm and peaceful.

- Think of having a “court appropriate” background. You want the attendees focus to be on you and not your surroundings. By having a clean setting with court appropriate art and decorations, you reduce the chance that attendees will get distracted. Clean up and have a simple background (a plain wall, a potted plant, or a bookshelf works perfectly).

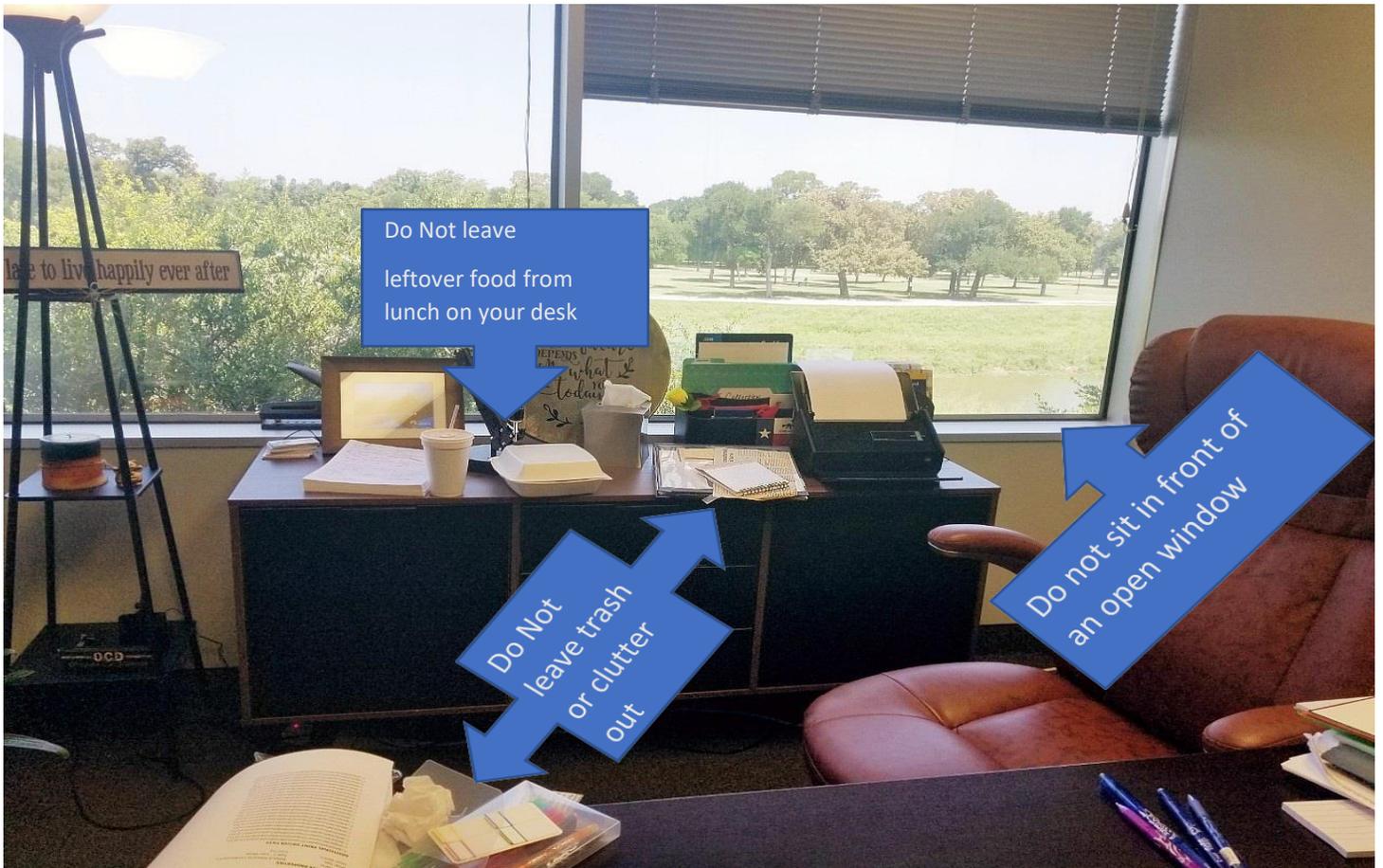
Avoiding glare:

Glare is subconsciously distracting

- Another thing you should think about when placing your pictures or anything behind you is glare. Remember that you are going to have lights facing directly at you and therefore anything directly behind you. Anything with a glass or reflective surface is going to shine back at you. Anything that reflects at you is going to be a distraction. To avoid glare, set up your scene for your Zoom hearing before hand. That way you can fix any lighting, sound, or background issues.



- **Your background should not be too busy.** Do not overly add photos or art. You don't want your background to be too plain (sterile), but you don't want so much going on back there that the other attendee's undivided attention is not on you. Do not sit with your back to a window. Sitting in front of a window adds more light to your scene and you don't want to have to adjust the lighting yet another time.



Zoom Hearing Do's and Don'ts:

Do: Turn off all outside notifications from your desktop, phone, or tablet.

Do: Close the door if you can

Do: Slide out of camera view with your chair before standing up.

Do: Mute your microphone when not speaking. This prevents any background noise like kids or pets from disturbing your hearing.

Do: Demonstrate active listening. Nodding your head, eye contact, and leaning forward will build rapport and establish trust.

Do: Have a separate phone/tablet/laptop available for direct correspondence with your attorney throughout your hearing. All settings should be on silent.

*Do: Try to obtain child/pet care for your hearing. Even though it is a zoom call, **you are still participating in Court Proceedings.** You should act as though you are going to court.*

Don't: Use Virtual Backgrounds

*Don't: Turn off your video. This completely defeats the purpose of the zoom hearing. **Please do not do this.***

Don't: Take your zoom call in a crowded place.

*Don't: Multi-task during meetings. Everyone has the ability to see what you are doing on Zoom. **Don't do anything you wouldn't do at court.** Eliminating distractions and focusing on your hearing will show respect and dedication to your case.*

*Don't: Stand up in front of your camera to excuse yourself from the call. **Instead, slide your chair out of your camera's view first and then stand up.***

*Don't: Eat in your Zoom hearing. **You are in court.** Hot drinks will alter the sound of your voice, so only cold drinks are permitted for your zoom hearing.*