

VIDEO AND TELEPHONE HEARINGS

Appeals will be addressed by telephone hearings or written submissions unless the participants request a video hearing and have access to the necessary technology. Please consider the following if a telephone or video hearing has been scheduled:

1. Required Information

- **Telephone hearing:** Provide a telephone number at which you and any witnesses can be reached. You will either be 1) called by the Appeal Commissioner or an Operator, or 2) be asked to dial-in to a group call. Please be available at least 5 minutes before the start of the call. You will be advised in the scheduling letter from the Tribunal if a dial-in call will be used.
- **Video hearing:** Provide an email address and telephone number at which you and any witnesses can be reached. You will receive an e-invitation to participate in the hearing using Microsoft Teams. If the Teams platform does not work, the Appeal Commissioner may convert the hearing to telephone or written submissions. Please be available at least 5 minutes before the start of the hearing.

2. Setting Up

- Accept the invitation for the meeting as soon as it is received
- Set up 30 minutes before the scheduled hearing time to make sure that your equipment is working, the room is set up appropriately, and you are connected.
- **Video hearings:**
 - A Microsoft account **must** be created before the e-invitation can be accepted.
 - Tribunal staff will conduct a tech-check in advance of the hearing with all un-represented participants to confirm that video is a workable option.
 - Representatives should complete a tech-check with their client and witnesses.
 - Tribunal staff cannot give advice on equipment or troubleshoot connectivity issues.

3. Being Prepared

- Make sure that anyone who will be speaking about a specific document has a copy and that the document has already been provided to the Tribunal.
- **Telephone hearing:**
 - Check that your telephone works. A land line has the best sound quality.
 - Confirm that your cell phone is charged and that a charger is nearby.
 - Confirm that there is a good connection.
 - If using a cell phone, consider headphones with a built-in microphone to provide the clearest sound quality.
 - If using a cell phone, put it on silent mode so that notification sounds do not disrupt the hearing.
- **Video hearing:**
 - Make sure that you (and any witnesses) have a computer/device with a webcam/speaker, access to high-speed internet service (preferably wired), and a laptop charger/power cord. If using a device, make sure that it is fully charged. Check the video quality and connection in advance.

- A headset with a microphone is recommended.
- Close all unnecessary applications on your computer and reduce the number of devices using an internet connection.

4. During the Hearing

- Use a quiet and private indoor place and let the Appeal Commissioner know if anyone comes into the room or can overhear the call.
- Have good lighting. It is difficult to see someone sitting in front of a window or light.
- Stay in front of the screen with the camera on during the video hearing.
- Keep background noise to a minimum. Try not to rustle papers or tap on keyboards.
- Telephone hearing: You may be asked by the Appeal Commissioner to identify yourself by name for the record before you speak.
- You may be asked to mute your phone or computer when not speaking to improve the sound quality of the hearing.
- All hearings will be recorded by WCAT. No other recording is permitted.
- Participants may not take photographs or generate screen captures.
- Request a break if you need one. Representatives are permitted to communicate with their clients separately (ie. by cell phone). Private discussions about evidence given on direct examination, or when a witness is in cross examination, including texting and emails or discussions on a break, are not permitted.
- **Telephone hearing:** Witnesses will be called when it is their turn to testify.
- **Video hearing:** Witnesses will wait in the virtual lobby until it is their turn to testify.

5. If You Become Disconnected During the Hearing

- **Telephone hearing:** If you were originally contacted directly by the Appeal Commissioner or the Operator, wait for them to call again. If you dialed in, try dialing in a second time.
- **Video hearing:** Go back to the link and re-enter the video hearing. If that doesn't work, either wait for the Appeal Commissioner to call or dial in to the pre-arranged telephone hearing. You will be advised before the hearing what steps to take.