

Guidelines for Video Conference Protest or Redress Hearings

Stage 1 – Organization and Implementation

1. The Organizing Authority is responsible for appointing the administrator (usually the Protest Committee chair). The administrator confirms the availability of the PC members, parties and witnesses and finalizes the hearing date and advises all participants.
NOTE: All participants are required to be seen on the call. The hearing is not to be held with any of the participants using only audio.
2. The hearing administrator sends out confirmation of the conference time and access info as far in advance as possible, provides cell phone contact info in case of access problems and gathers cell numbers for all participants.
3. *Note: the administrator should allow adequate time for unexpected delays and/or extended PC discussions.*
4. The administrator emails a reminder to participants four to seven days in advance and sends a final reminder the day before.
5. The administrator distributes paperwork (NOR, SIs, protest form and any other documents that apply) at least three days in advance to allow parties to prepare.
6. The administrator ensures that a computer diagramming program (TSS, Boats Scenario or Sail Play) will be open on the presenter's screen to create a diagram during the hearing (or recreate the diagram filed with the protest ahead of time to use as a starting point).

Stage 2 – The Hearing

7. At least 15 minutes before the start time, the administrator opens the online meeting site and ensures that all controls work. The administrator stays online to greet the parties.
8. The administrator obtains cell numbers from all parties and gives a protest committee cell number to parties and witnesses in case of accidental disconnection.

9. Witnesses join the call at the beginning with all others to hear instructions on procedures of the video call. After instruction, they hang up and stand by via cell. They are called later by the administrator to re-enter the hearing using the original link to the video call to provide their testimony. They should be called back within 20 to 30 minutes.
10. The PC considers validity. If a discussion is needed, the Administrator mutes all parties' mikes while the jury discusses (rather than asking the parties to exit the call). Alternately, the PC may also shut off the parties' screens and audio to discuss validity. After deciding validity, the PC restores contact with the parties, announces its decision on validity and either continues or closes the hearing.
11. The committee continues with normal hearing procedures per Appendix M. The PC should save questions for the protestor and protestee until after the witnesses have given testimony and have been questioned by the PC and the protestee and protestor.
12. Witness are called to testify one at a time without any other witnesses connected.
13. Once the witnesses complete their testimony and have been cross-examined by the parties and PC, they are asked to leave the call and told that if not called back within 20 minutes, they are excused from the hearing with thanks.
14. Parties are invited to make summary statements, then are asked to sign off while the PC deliberates.
15. The PC remains on the call to discuss the facts and come to a decision.
16. The parties are called to come back onto the video conference call for the decision. This will permit questions to be answered fully, accurately and on a timely basis.
17. If it is too late in the day to communicate the decision, the PC chair will contact the parties, one at a time, as soon as possible the next day. *Note: An actual conversation between the PC Chair and each of the parties is required; voice messages are not to be left.*
18. The decision and other documents are sent via email to the parties and filed with the OA.