

280th JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

STANDING ORDER ON VIRTUAL COURTROOM ETIQUETTE¹

The courtroom, whether a physical in-person courtroom, or a virtual courtroom using telephone or video technology, remains a formal and serious setting where matters involving real people and real lives are heard. Every case is important, and all participants are asked to maintain court decorum in the virtual world, just as they would in person. We ask all individuals participating in Virtual Court proceedings to continue to observe the following well-established rules of court decorum:

- 1) Arrive on Time and Follow Virtual Platform Directions** To minimize distractions during the court proceeding, log in a few minutes before the scheduled start time and follow the Zoom (or other virtual platform directions provided by your presiding judge and/or their staff. Identify yourself when in the virtual meeting with your real name, and if you are appearing by phone, please disclose your identity immediately upon inquiry.
- 2) Dress Appropriately for Court** Business attire is always appropriate for court; sweatshirts, gym clothes, Hawaiian shirts, concert t-shirts, sports team jerseys and pajamas, and low cut shirts or tank tops are never appropriate. Attorneys: while we understand you must juggle multiple roles while working from home, Court dress is still required- dress shirt, tie and suit jacket for men and business dress attire for women. *Please send the Court an email if something happens and you can not appear in business dress.
- 3) Eliminate Distractions** Participating in Virtual Court proceedings often means working from home. Please try to locate a quiet area and minimize interruptions by others in the home. While we agree that your children and pets are adorable, their presence in the virtual courtroom distracts you, the Court, and other participants from the subject matter of the hearing. We recognize in the close quarters of the safer at home order that hermit-like quiet is not available to everyone, but please minimize distractions as much as possible.

Consider using a Zoom Virtual Background to eliminate visual distractions in the background. Put your cell phones and other technology in silent mode during the Virtual Court proceeding. Please make sure you have good lighting and are near your internet device so you have optimum bandwidth.

- 4) Do Not Speak out of turn or Interfere in testimony** Just like an in-person court setting, the presiding judge will indicate when it's your turn to be heard. In order to prevent any accidental audio distractions, please mute your audio setting until it is your turn to speak. If another person is testifying, you may not suggest answers, make gestures, or otherwise coach a witness or a party from offcamera. Raise your hand if you have a question or objection to make.
- 5) Applicants and Respondents are not allowed to communicate with each other during the time the parties are in the virtual courtroom.** No chatting, no texting, no emailing, no calling. Period.
- 6) Be Courteous and Respectful to all Virtual Court Participants** Use good manners; ensure that your physical and facial expressions are appropriate and uphold the dignity of a court setting. Ensure your language upholds the

¹ 3/31/2021

Adapted from 20th Circuit Court Florida, Judge Hawthorne.

dignity of a court setting – no profanity. Do not raise your voice to the other participants or to the Court. Please treat the Court proceedings and participants with respect and professionalism.

7) Do Not Bring Food to the Virtual Courtroom This includes chewing gum. Coffee is fine, we all need coffee. Water is also fine. But please do not eat while you are in the virtual courtroom (unless you have permission due to a health condition).

8) Do not Use Tobacco or Vaping Products in the Virtual Courtroom. This means NO smoking, chewing tobacco or vaping.

9) Sit Up Straight Show the same courtesy the Court is showing you. Do not prop your feet up on a table or chair. Do not lie in bed or on the floor. Do not go to sleep or point your camera to the ceiling or other parts of the room. Keep the video on yourself unless otherwise directed.

10) Do not groom yourself while you are in the virtual courtroom. Ladies, please do not put on makeup or tend to your hair.

/s/ Barbara J. Stalder

JUDGE BARBARA J. STALDER
Presiding.

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² The above virtual court decorum rules were adapted from the Judge Hawthorne. 20th Judicial Circuit Florida