

News Advisory: Accessing public court hearings via Zoom

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The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan has improved the way the media and public may obtain video access to public court hearings. The new system, which went into effect last week, permits anyone to sign up for access to public hearings in civil and criminal cases while our courthouses remain closed.

“With few exceptions nearly all matters, criminal and civil, heard in our courtrooms are open to the public,” said Chief U.S. District Judge Denise Page Hood. “Our court staff has worked very hard to make that happen during a pandemic that forced us to temporarily close our courthouses.”

For information about accessing a hearing, go to the Court’s website at <https://www.mied.uscourts.gov> and click on the “Notice Regarding Press and Public Access to Court Hearings” banner at the top of the page. It will take you to “Information on Accessing Court Proceedings” with the following hyperlinks:

1. [Visit our Court Calendar](#) to access court proceedings.
2. [Criminal Duty Court](#) to access initial appearances, arraignments and other preliminary hearings.
3. [PACER](#) to look up a case in the federal cases database. Accessing PACER will require a subscription which may be obtained at: https://www.pacer.gov/reg_pacer.html#:~:text=To%20obtain%20a%20PACER%20account,provided%20on%20the%20registration%20form.

When you submit a form to attend a video hearing, you will be required to check a box indicating you have read and understand the court rules that prohibit recording or photographing court proceedings. The prohibitions include taking screenshots or live streaming hearings. Violations may result in suspension or revocation of media credentials and possible contempt proceedings.

We recommend that you request hearing access at least one full weekday in advance of the hearing so we may accommodate your request.

Access via Option 1

Click on “[visit our Court Calendar](#)” to see a daily list of all public hearings. Click on “Date Range,” “Jump to Date” or the left and right arrow keys at the top of the Court Calendar to view a list of future public hearings. Keep in mind that hearings scheduled days or weeks in advance may be rescheduled.

When the list of cases appears, click the “Access Attendance Information” box below the case you wish to attend, enter the information and Submit.

If you receive a message indicating that no connection details are available, email Public Information Officer David Ashenfelter at David_Ashenfelter@mied.uscourts.gov to inquire about the hearing.

Access via Option 2

For access to initial appearances, arraignments, detention hearings, preliminary hearings and other hearings in our Duty Court, click on “Criminal Duty Court” to access a registration page. Click on the drop-down “Date/Time of Hearing” box to find your hearing.

Enter the required information in the fields and follow the instructions. If you cannot find the hearing you wish to attend, email Public Information Officer David Ashenfelter at David_Ashenfelter@mied.uscourts.gov.