

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE COUNTY OF SKAGIT

IN THE MATTER OF	) NO. 25-2
	)
SKAGIT COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT	) EMERGENCY
RESPONSE TO SKAGIT COUNTY BUDGET	) ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
SHORTFALLS AND HIRING FREEZE – ZOOM	) October 31, 2025
ACCESS TO COURT HEARINGS	)

WHEREAS, Skagit County is facing a \$19 million dollar general fund shortfall for 2026 and has implemented a hiring freeze on all positions.

WHEREAS, Skagit County Superior Court will be impacted by the hiring freeze and will face a staff shortage as of December 5, 2025.

WHEREAS, Skagit County Superior Court will be unable to maintain current service levels above statutory and legal requirements with the anticipated staff shortage.

WHEREAS, Skagit County Superior Court has offered remote access to court hearings through Zoom since the COVID-19 pandemic, both as a courtesy to litigants and as a way to increase access to justice.

WHEREAS, allowing Zoom access to court proceedings requires staff resources to set up the Zoom courtrooms, admit litigants from waiting rooms, identify litigants, create and disburse litigants and their attorneys into confidential "break-out rooms," and monitor the Zoom participants throughout court hearings for disruptions, to keep the rooms active, and trouble-shoot technological issues.

WHEREAS, Skagit County Superior Court has directly experienced disruptions to Court proceedings from Zoom participants including but not limited to delays to ensure video and sound capabilities are functional, litigants entering the wrong virtual courtroom and having to be disconnected and reconnected, and an increase in unprofessional, and potentially prejudicial courtroom behavior that requires constant monitoring of the lines while active.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2025 until further notice:

Except as otherwise noted below, absent a court order specifically authorizing Zoom access for a specific litigant for a specific hearing, Zoom will not be authorized or available for Skagit County Superior Court access.

- a. Zoom will continue to be available for all civil protection order litigants, as is currently offered, without need for additional request.
- b. Zoom will continue to be available for use on the Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon criminal first appearance, or rightings calendars, as is currently offered, without need for additional request.
- c. Zoom will continue to be available for unlawful detainer actions.
- d. Zoom will continue to be available for guardians ad litem and/or court visitors in guardianship and domestic matters. There will not be an option to put guardians ad litem or court visitors "into a breakout room" with any of the litigants. There will not be an option for litigants and attorneys to appear via Zoom absent prior court order.

Zoom will be available upon request for the criminal motions calendar, if the person appearing or testifying is in the custody of Department of Corrections or appearing from Western State Hospital. Any request for a Zoom appearance on criminal motions must be made at least 2 court days in advance to Skagit County Superior Court Administration – superiorcourtadmin@co.skagit.wa.us.

Any request for a Zoom appearance on any other case or hearing type must be made by way of motion.

This order will remain in effect until further notice.

DATE: October 31, 2025.



Elizabeth Yost Neidzwski
Presiding Judge
Skagit County Superior Court