

Skagit County Superior Court

VIDEO HEARING FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

Do I have to appear by video?

If you are appearing for a trial, you will need to appear by video. The only exception is where a judge has pre-approved a request for you to appear by phone.

For other hearings, we prefer for people to appear by video. Every hearing is also available by phone.

Are there rules for participating in video court?

The rules for telephonic hearings also apply to video court:

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/SuperiorCourt/Documents/TELEPHONE%20HEARING%20RULES.pdf>

Keep in mind that the background on the video screen is what everyone else in the hearing will be able to see. You don't need to create a courtroom environment in your home or car, but you should be aware of any people or personal items in the background that you would not want to be shown in court.

Skagit County Superior Court uses Zoom. In Zoom, you can also choose a court-appropriate image to be your background if you do not feel comfortable showing your surroundings to the court.

Is video court free?

Yes. It is free for you to access video court.

Do I need special technology to use video court?

All you need is computer with video capability, a tablet, or a smartphone.

- *Computer/laptop:* Go to the internet and either enter the link for the hearing (see the Daily Court Schedule) or go to Zoom.us and follow the prompts to install Zoom.
- *Apple Tablets or Smartphones:* Go to your AppStore and download Zoom for iOS.
- *Android Tablets or Smartphones:* Go to GooglePlay and download Zoom for Android.

Once you are in Zoom, you will need to enter the Meeting ID and Password for your court session. You will then be guided through a quick and simple process to join the session.

Where do I find information about joining video court?

If video court is available for your hearing, you can find the access code for your hearing through several sources:

- Your attorney
- The Daily Court Schedule, published here:
<https://www.skagitcounty.net/SuperiorCourt/documents/schedule/courtroomschedule.pdf>
- The Daily Court Schedule is also posted in various physical locations throughout the courthouse.

How can I use video court if I don't have an internet connection?

*Home Internet Access**: During the COVID-19 pandemic, some internet providers are providing free or low-cost access at home. You should contact your local provider for more information on those programs.

*Wi-Fi**: Free Wi-Fi may be accessed through a number of public and private resources. Even if their doors are closed, Wi-Fi access might be available from the parking lot of a place with public Wi-Fi. Skagit County buildings offer free public Wi-Fi access.

Calling into the hearing may also be an option. The phone number and access code for your hearing is published every day on the Superior Court website or is available from your attorney. If you are being called to testify or are a party in a trial, you will need to connect by video.

If the phone number is busy, try one of the following numbers to access the hearing:

(346) 248-7799; (669) 900-9128; (312) 626-6799; (646) 558-8656, or; (301) 715-8592

**Skagit County Superior Court cannot recommend specific internet providers or reliable sources of public Wi-Fi. Use of public Wi-Fi could make your device vulnerable to hacking.*

How do I use video court if my internet connection isn't very strong?

If your internet connection is unreliable, just use your phone for audio access to the hearing. This can be done by calling the number for the hearing and entering the access code. You can still join the hearing by video, but your phone will provide continuous access to the hearing if your internet connection is interrupted.

If your bandwidth is low, consider turning off the video that shows your face. This will allow you to maintain a better connection to the proceedings. If you want to be seen during your hearing, you can allow the video of yourself to be displayed just when your case is being called.

When should I connect into video court?

Just like coming to physical court, you should connect to video court *before* the hearing is scheduled to start.

If it's your first time connecting into video court, you should start the process of joining the session at least ten minutes before court is scheduled to begin. This will give you time to get used to the process before court starts.

Just stay on the line until the judge starts court.

If you are late for court, just join the session and stay on mute until your case is called. Just like you wouldn't announce yourself if you were late for court in person, you should not interrupt other hearings because you were late.

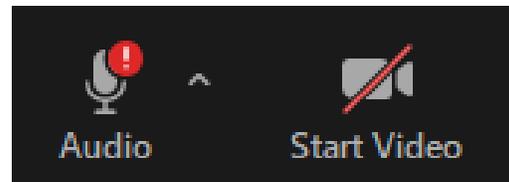
Basic Controls

These are at the bottom of your screen.

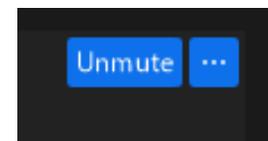
If you can't see them, move your finger or mouse on the screen and they will reappear.

Audio: Click on this to mute or unmute yourself.

Video: Clicking on this will stop or start the video of yourself. Even if your video is off, you will still be able to view the hearing.



Renaming Yourself: If you have used Zoom before, you might need to correct your name. It helps court move more smoothly when we know who is present. Just swipe your cursor or finger over the video of yourself. You see three little dots in the corner of that video screen, which will give you the option to rename yourself under your legal name.



End: When your hearing is done, click to "End." This will allow you to exit video court.

Audio Solutions

It is important for everyone in court to hear and understand you. You do not need special equipment for video court, but it can sometimes help to connect your audio through a headset. This will allow for a clearer connection.

Choosing to use phone for your audio instead of your computer might also help, especially if your internet connection is not very stable.