

INDUSTRIAL COURT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

PROTOCOL REGARDING REMOTE HEARINGS

Introduction to Protocol

1. The current global Coronavirus pandemic along with the general social distancing guidelines to citizens necessitates the use of remote hearings in some aspects of the operations of the Industrial Court. This Protocol only applies to hearings of Case Management, Directions and Mention and Reports and seeks to provide basic guidance as to the conduct and preparation of remote hearings.
2. Whilst the Court's building currently remains open, the objective is to provide an option to parties to utilise remote hearings of Case Management, Directions and Mention and Reports in order to minimise the risk of transmission of the Coronavirus.
3. Parties must inform the Court if they wish to utilise remote hearings. This should be done at least three (3) days before the actual date of hearing.
4. The Court has two video conferencing platforms available which can be utilised namely: (a) Zoom and (b) Microsoft Teams.
5. Before scheduling a remote Court hearing, parties are to ensure that their contact information which include email addresses and telephone numbers are updated and that they are provided to the Court.

Conduct of the Remote Hearing

6. Parties, will be required to log in or call in to the hearing at least fifteen (15) minutes before the start of the hearing to ensure that there are no connectivity issues. Prior to the remote hearing, parties are also required to conduct a test of the technology which will include testing your camera, microphone and sound settings.

7. It is inevitable that since the Court will be undertaking numerous hearings remotely for the first time, there may be teething troubles. Parties are urged to be sympathetic to the technological and other difficulties experienced by others.
8. During the conduct of any remote hearings parties must stay within the view of the camera. Parties would only be permitted to remove themselves from the view of the camera or leave the hearing while it is in progress, with leave of the Court.
9. While the remote hearing is being conducted, there may be a delay between the image of the party and the voice that is heard.
10. The Host/Administrator of the remote hearing will have control at all times to mute and unmute the parties' microphones during the hearing. If you wish to address the Court or to interrupt a speaker you can notify the Host/Administrator by using the "Raise Hand" icon.
11. To ensure confidentiality, we request that you close all other forms of communication media during the hearing, such as WhatsApp, Facebook etc.
12. In the case of a technical failure, the hearing may have to be stood down or adjourned to another date, if the technical problem cannot be resolved within a specified time frame.
13. The parties are not permitted to record the hearing and would be required to give an undertaking to that effect at the beginning of the hearing.
14. All the established Protocols and Procedures of the Industrial Court apply throughout the entire session.
15. The Court would generate its respective Orders related to the remote hearing and these Orders would be delivered to parties.

Preparation for the Remote Hearing

16. All documents are to be filed and stamped at the Industrial Court's Registry. If a document is to be referred to or relied upon, parties are to ensure that the document has been filed beforehand at the Court.
17. Only parties to the proceedings should be present in the room at the time of the remote hearing.
18. Chose an area where you have a reliable internet connection, adequate lighting and a quiet location without noise and other distractions. Ensure that you are at a reasonable distance from the camera so that you can be audible and clearly visible.
19. Avoid sitting with your back to a window or light source as this may affect the image. Choose a neutral background with no personal items and few distractions such as pictures or ornaments. Close doors and windows to prevent outside noise from being heard.
20. Please feel free to contact the Industrial Court for any further guidance which you may require. The contact information are as follows:

Telephone : - 1-868-225-4288 Ext 2213, 2201, 2205 (North)
1-868-225-4288 Ext 1102, 1103 (South)

Email : - courtregistry@industrialcourt.org.tt.

Website : - industrialcourt.org.tt

Dated this 24th day of June, 2020

/s/ Deborah Thomas-Felix
President