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Clerk

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Guide for Attorneys Using Webex for Oral Arguments in the Court of Appeals of Maryland

During the COVID-19 emergency, the Court of Appeals of Maryland will conduct oral arguments by an on-line video conferencing platform known as Cisco Webex. Prior to oral arguments, please read this guide in its entirety for important information and notices.

Before Oral Arguments

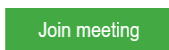
It is important that you test the computer, audio, video and internet connection technology that you will use during the oral argument. A hard-wired internet connection using a cable will be more stable than relying on a Wi-Fi network. You may want to have a smart phone or tablet available with the Cisco Webex app on it because a wireless data connected device can serve as an emergency backup should there be a problem with your network.

It is very important to test the equipment in the same location and, to the extent possible, under the same conditions that you will encounter during oral argument. Your location during the video conference is important – find a quiet place where audio and visual interruptions and distractions are minimized. Avoid being backlit, if at all possible, as that puts your face into shadows. Avoid a distracting, cluttered, or overly personal background – oral arguments will be livestreamed and also recorded and archived on the Court’s website. There are videos on YouTube about looking better on video calls that provide advice about lighting, backgrounds, and so on. This is just one example: [How to Look Better on Video Calls](#).

It is highly recommended that you conduct a Webex moot court with your colleagues. If you encounter difficulties during your moot court, contact the Clerk’s Office as soon as possible to discuss how you can resolve those issues prior to oral argument.

Test Meeting

A day or so prior to your scheduled oral argument you will receive an invitation to a test meeting with the Clerk of the Court of Appeals, Suzanne Johnson. The invitation will include a link (in the form of a green button that looks like this):



To join the meeting, click the button. We request that you download the Webex desktop app when prompted, as it will make troubleshooting easier from our end if everyone is getting into the meetings through the app. The invitation also includes the Meeting ID and password. If you have difficulty getting into the meeting using the “Join Meeting” button, you can connect by using the Meeting ID and password.

At that test meeting you will have an opportunity to ask questions about the procedures for video oral arguments, which are set forth in detail under the “Oral Arguments” section, below. You will also be able to check your internet, audio, and video connection, and check your lighting and background. Court personnel will be able to assist you with troubleshooting audio/video problems that you may be having and suggest alternate audio/video methods. During this meeting, you should practice leaving the meeting and following the procedure given to reconnect, to simulate what to do if there is an interruption in internet service or other technical issues. You will be asked to provide a mobile phone number and email address to court personnel so that they can contact you in the event of technical difficulties.

You should also be prepared to indicate to the Clerk how you will be dividing your argument time, if applicable.

Oral Arguments

****Please be advised that oral arguments are being recorded and webcast****

You will receive separately an invitation to the Court session itself. All cases scheduled for argument on the same day will receive the same link and meeting information. Do not forward the email to anyone else. Only the Judges, court personnel, and counsel of record will be permitted in the meeting. If there is a technical glitch and arguments need to proceed as a voice-only conference, use the call-in numbers in the invitation to join the voice conference.

On the day of your argument, join the meeting between 9:30 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. to check in with the Clerk. To maintain a strong internet connection, we recommend that you exit out of all other applications on your computer. This also reduces distractions and prevents any applications from inadvertently making sounds during the argument, such as email chimes.

After you have been checked in and given information and instructions you will be moved to the meeting “lobby.” Counsel for the first case will be moved into the meeting once the Court is ready for you at approximately 10:00 a.m. – please remain near your computer and prepared to be returned to the meeting without advance notice. Counsel for the second case (and subsequent cases, if applicable) is asked to remain in the meeting lobby until the first case is finished. The arguments will be live streamed and can be watched at the [Court of Appeals Live Webcast](https://mdcourts.gov/coappeals/webcasts) (<https://mdcourts.gov/coappeals/webcasts>) page, so you can keep track of how arguments in the preceding case are proceeding and predict when you will be moved into the meeting. The lobby has the meeting name, which will be Court of Appeals Oral Arguments and the date. We will bring you in from the lobby when the Judges are online and ready to go – this is the opposite of our live oral arguments. Do not think you need to re-join the meeting when you are in the lobby.

IMPORTANT: If you lose your connection to the meeting while you are waiting in the lobby, please *do not* immediately rejoin the meeting. Please text the meeting host, Sara Rabe, at 301-875-2395. She will let you know when to return to the meeting by text message.

During the argument, there is a slight audio delay. If you do not stop talking immediately when you hear a Judge speaking you will be talking over each other for a brief time. **Using**

the gallery view instead of the speaker view in Webex is highly recommended, as you will be able to see all the Judges at once. This may help you identify who is speaking when multiple people speak at once. It will also more closely approximate standing in front of the bench as you would during an oral argument presented in the courtroom.

Please mute your microphone when you enter the meeting. If you do not, the meeting host will mute you. This prevents feedback and other noise. Stay muted until your turn to argue is recognized by the Chief Judge. If you are reading something, please try to stay facing forward and near the microphone or computer. This will prevent many audio difficulties.

If there is a technical problem with the video conference, the meeting host or the Clerk will announce that there is a problem (if possible) and will instruct everyone to leave the meeting and rejoin five minutes later. If you detect a technical problem and you are not then arguing, please raise your hand and the Chief Judge will recognize you so that the technical problem can be resolved. If the Clerk or the meeting host are not able to make an announcement and there is a technical problem, leave the meeting, wait five minutes, and then rejoin the meeting using the same invitation you originally received.

To the extent possible, present your argument as you would if you were in the courtroom. When a Judge has a question, he or she will raise his or her hand. This is an indication to Chief Judge Barbera, not counsel, that a Judge has a question. Please do not call on the Judge who has a raised hand or stop the presentation of your argument. Rather, continue your argument until Chief Judge Barbera acknowledges the Judge who has a raised hand, i.e., “Counsel, I see that Judge McDonald has a question,” at which point the Judge who has a question will proceed to ask the question.

Following oral arguments, the Clerk’s Office welcomes any feedback from counsel regarding your experience using Webex for oral arguments so that we can continue to improve our processes. Email any questions, comments, or concerns to coaclerkofthecourt@mdcourts.gov.

Below are links to useful information online, a checklist to help you prepare for oral arguments, and a basic guide for logging into a Webex meeting.

Useful Information Online

The Cisco website has lots of instructions and videos. These are great places to start:

[Get Started With Cisco Webex Meetings for Attendees](#)

[Join a Webex Meeting from an Email Invitation](#)

[Join a Webex Meeting from the Desktop App](#)

[Choose Your Audio and Video Settings Before You Join a Webex Meeting or Event](#)

Checklist to Prepare for Oral Arguments

- 1) Obtain a free Webex account from webex.com.
- 2) Download the Webex desktop app.
- 3) Find or create a proper location to set up your computer for the argument:
 - a. Plain or simple backgrounds are best;
 - b. Decide whether to stand or sit and have a way to position your computer so that the camera is at eye level whichever you choose;
 - c. Avoid having windows or other lighting behind you. It is better to light yourself from the front;
 - d. Provide yourself some place for your brief, notes, etc. so they are readily accessible;
 - e. Wear appropriate attire – this is a formal court proceeding and it is being recorded for the Court’s permanent archive of oral arguments recordings.
- 4) Conduct a test meeting on Webex to test your camera, microphone and speakers. You can do that [here](https://www.webex.com/test-meeting.html#).
- 5) Participate in a moot court using Webex.
- 6) Make sure to attend the test meeting that you will be invited to with court personnel prior to the day of argument. Conduct the test meeting with the equipment and in the location where you intend to present your argument.
- 7) Have your meeting details readily available for both the test meeting and oral arguments.
- 8) Check in for oral arguments as early as possible to resolve any technical problems.

Logging into Webex

- 1) You will receive login information like this. The easiest way to join a meeting is to click the “Join Meeting” button – it will take you directly to the meeting. You may be asked to download the Webex application – click run.

██████████ invites you to join this Webex meeting.

Meeting number (access code) ██████████

Meeting password: ██████████ (██████████ from phones and video systems)

Friday, April 24, 2020
9:00 am | (UTC-04:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada) | 45 mins

Join meeting

Join by phone

Tap to call in from a mobile device (attendees only)

[+1-408-418-9388](tel:+14084189388) United States Toll

[Global call-in numbers](#)

Join from a video system or application

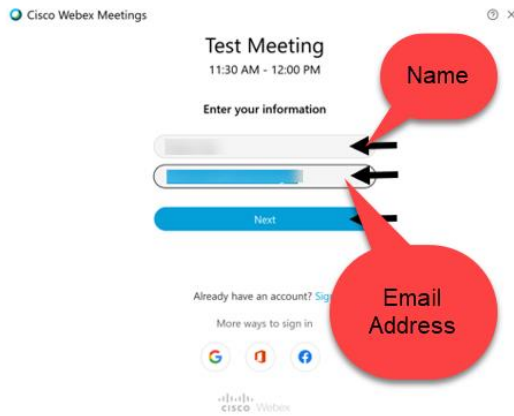
Dial ██████████ [@mdcourts.webex.com](mailto:██████████@mdcourts.webex.com)

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

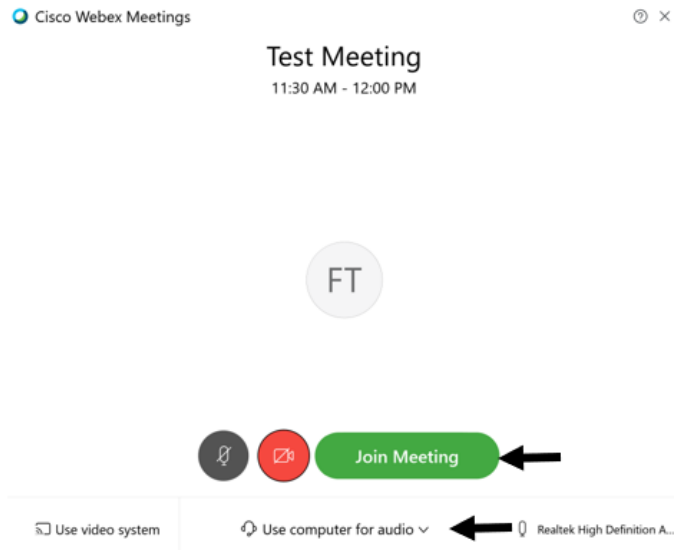
Join using Microsoft Lync or Microsoft Skype for Business

Dial ██████████ [mdcourts@lync.webex.com](mailto:██████████@lync.webex.com)



- 2) You will be asked to use a name and provide an email address. Write your name as you would like it to appear to the Judges, the other participants, and those on the web. Select next.

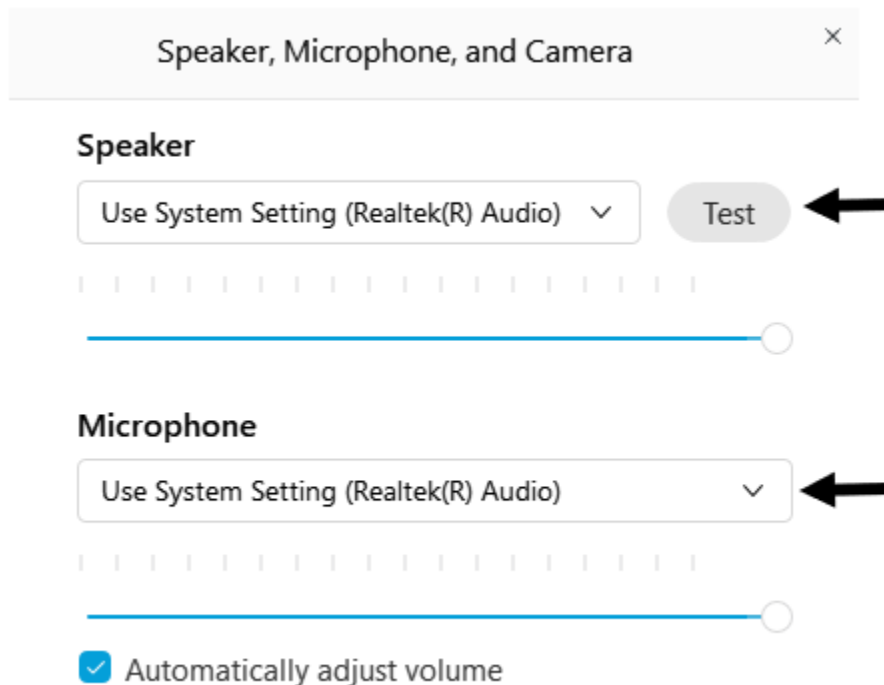


- 3) Select “Join Meeting” after selecting your audio choice – computer/internet audio is the best selection.





4) **To test your microphone and speaker settings**, follow these instructions.



- a. Select the more  options  Speaker, microphone, and camera | button
- b. Use the drop-down arrows under the speaker and microphone options to select the device you would like to use. Also, you can test your speaker by selecting the test button.



5) **To mute and unmute your microphone** follow these instructions:

- a. To unmute your microphone, select the  button.
- b. To mute your microphone, select the  button.

6) **To stop or start sharing your webcam video**, follow the below instructions.

- a. To start sharing your webcam, select the  button.
- b. To stop sharing your webcam, select the  button.

7) Here is what the screen looks like:

