

**DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND
ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR) OFFICE**

ONLINE/REMOTE ADR SESSION PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS

Video-teleconferencing is an effective method of communication for resolving disputes. As with any technology, it takes some getting used to. These instructions address technical issues, privacy and confidentiality, tips for using the Zoom video-teleconferencing platform, and what to do in case of session interruption.

While it is preferred that all participants be available by video-teleconference, that is not always possible. If all participants agree, each person may elect to participate differently, based on their access to the required technology. For example, one participant may call into the ADR session by phone. In such instances, the ADR Office will discuss with the participant(s) the security and practical implications of joining the ADR session by telephone, instead of video.

GETTING TO KNOW ZOOM PRIOR TO THE ADR SESSION

It is recommended that you **familiarize yourself with the Zoom platform prior to** participating in a **Remote ADR session**.

- Tutorials are available on how to:
 - Join a meeting: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-meeting>
 - Test computer or device audio: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362283-How-Do-I-Join-or-Test-My-Computer-Audio->
- You are welcome, but not required, to create a free account (www.zoom.us) before a scheduled ADR session to familiarize yourself with the platform's functionality and features.

The ADR practitioner will provide a brief overview of Zoom with all participants at the beginning of the ADR session.

USING ZOOM DURING THE ADR SESSION

An **e-mail meeting invitation** will be sent to each participant from the ADR Office.

- This e-mail meeting invitation will include the scheduled date and time of the Zoom ADR session, a hyperlink to join the meeting online, and a unique meeting ID number and password.
- Plan to go into the Zoom ADR Session at least 10 minutes before your scheduled session to be sure the Zoom platform opens on your device and appears properly.
- It is important that you remain stationary and are not driving while participating in your Zoom ADR session, as the ADR Practitioner may need you to read or review documents during the session.

When entering the Zoom ADR Session, you will be placed in a **virtual Waiting Room**.

- While in the Waiting Room, you will not be able to communicate with others in the Waiting Room.
- The ADR Practitioner will admit participants to the main ADR session room at the ADR session start time. The ADR practitioner will only admit authorized participants.

Tips for Maximizing your Experience on Zoom

- Select **Gallery View** and **Full Screen** to see all participants and the ADR Practitioner.
- Be sure the **microphone and video icons** in the lower left corner of the toolbar at the bottom of the screen **do not have a red diagonal line**. To turn-on the video or microphone, click on the icon for options.

Communication

- Please try not to talk over each other during the Zoom session. If you do, Zoom may drop part of the communication. Let the person speaking finish before starting to speak.
- When not speaking, you may mute your microphone. Putting yourself on mute may also prevent background noise from interrupting what you can hear or what others can hear.
- If you are participating by phone and you receive a phone call:
 - If you answer the phone call, Zoom will disconnect. You will need to rejoin the Zoom session.
 - If you decline the call, you may need to readjust the volume on your phone.
- If multiple participants reside in the same household, it is best if each participant is in a different location, on a different device. This avoids creating audio feedback, and allows each participant to be seen separately on camera.

There may come a time when the ADR practitioner will **meet with each participant separately and confidentially**. This is referred to as a **caucus**.

- The ADR Practitioner(s) will alternate moving participants in and out of the Waiting Room during a caucus.
- The participant(s) remaining in the main session room will speak privately with the ADR practitioner.
- The participant(s) in the Waiting Room will be unable to hear what is said in the main session room.
- After meeting with one participant, the ADR practitioner will switch the participants in and out of the Waiting Room and main session room to host a private conversation with the second participant(s).
- If a participant wishes to speak privately with their attorney or another participant, the ADR Practitioner can assign those participants/attorneys to a private “Breakout Room.” Attendees in a Breakout Room cannot be seen or heard by other participants and the ADR Practitioner while in the breakout room.

TECHNOLOGY

You will need to verify that you have necessary technology prior to participating in a Zoom ADR Session:

- Device to be used (laptop, desktop, or other)
- Wi-Fi or Ethernet
- Strong Internet Connection
- Microphone
- Speakers
- Camera

You will **need a secure Wi-Fi or Ethernet (hard-wired) connection** for your computer.

- It is recommend that you do not use a public access Wi-Fi connection, such as those available in public spaces and businesses, as they are not secure and may put your information at risk.

Be sure to have a **strong Internet connection**. Having enough bandwidth and speed is critical.

- To increase bandwidth, reduce the number of devices using a router.
- Test the speed and dependability of your connection BEFORE the ADR session.

Participation in the Zoom ADR Session **from a laptop or a desktop** is recommended.

- The viewing screen is larger than on other devices.
- Smartphones and tablets may be used and may present visibility challenges when reviewing documents, such as a settlement agreement, and when viewing the ADR Practitioner(s) and other participants on the screen.

Audio for Speaking (Microphone)

- The microphone on a recent model laptop or Smartphone should be sufficient.
- If not, you may need to use a plug-in microphone, headset or ear buds with a wired microphone, or dial-in separately using your phone to be heard during the meeting. However, be aware that moving your head or shoulders may introduce background noise through a corded microphone.

Audio for Listening (Speakers)

- The speakers on your laptop or desktop computer should be sufficient.
- You may use wireless or corded earbuds.

Video (Camera)

To be visible during your remote ADR session, you need to have a camera connected to your device.

- The camera on a recent model laptop or desktop, Smartphone or tablet, should be sufficient.
- If your desktop or other device does not have a camera, or if the video quality is not optimum, you can use a removable HD camera.
- When participating in a video-conference, the area behind you is visible to the ADR Practitioner(s) and other participants (e.g., room décor or sensitive documents). The use of Zoom virtual backgrounds is discouraged.

Notifications and Minimizing Distractions

- Turn off or put on silent any phones, tablets, or computers in the room that are not being used to access the Zoom ADR Session.
- Disable any alert audible notifications while participating in the Zoom ADR session.
- Please refrain from texting, using social media, checking and responding to e-mail, using internet search engines, etc. during the Zoom ADR session.

TECHNOLOGY FAILURE PROTOCOL

Despite our best efforts, a Zoom ADR session may be interrupted for any number of reasons, including an Internet failure, a device failure, or an unexpected loss of cell phone service. Do not panic.

If the Zoom ADR session unexpectedly ends, please take the following steps:

1. First try re-joining the session by going to the original e-mail and clicking on the hyperlink to re-establish the connection to the Zoom ADR session.

2. If this does not resolve the issue, call in to the Zoom ADR session using your phone and participate as a teleconference instead of a videoconference. Refer to the call-in information in the original e-mail.
3. If you are unable to call into the meeting, call **410-260-1971** to let our program coordinator know you are experiencing technical difficulty re-joining the Zoom ADR session.
4. In the event of an absolute failure of technology, and where a conference call is not feasible, the ADR session will be postponed and rescheduled.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Use a **quiet, private place** free from distractions, including cell phones, TVs, and other people to participate in the Zoom ADR session.

- No one is permitted to be present in the Zoom ADR session except by consent of all participants.
- The ADR Practitioner(s) will admit to the Zoom ADR session only those participants who are authorized to participate.
- No other people are permitted to be in the same room, but off-camera, with any of the participants or the ADR practitioner(s). At the beginning of the session, the ADR Practitioner(s) will ask each participant to verify that no other people are off-camera.