



Online Video Hearings at the Social Security Administration

Our hearing offices are currently closed to the public due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, so we cannot offer in-person services in our hearing offices at this time. We are still holding hearings, but we are conducting them remotely for the safety of the public and our employees. You have the option of appearing at a video hearing using a platform called Microsoft Teams.

What are “online video hearings”?

An online video hearing is a secure hearing that we conduct by video, over the internet, using Microsoft Teams. You can appear at an online video hearing safely and securely from anywhere using a smartphone, tablet, or camera-enabled computer with a secure internet connection.

What are the technology requirements to participate in an online video hearing?

To participate in an online video hearing, you must have access to email. You may appear at the hearing using a personal desktop computer, laptop, or an Android/Apple tablet or phone with a secure internet connection. Your device must have a camera, microphone, and speakers.

Before the date of your online video hearing, we will email you a link to a user guide that explains how to access and use Microsoft Teams on your personal device of choice. You can also visit www.ssa.gov/appeals/hearing_options.html to view the user guide.

How do I notify SSA if I want to appear at an online video hearing?

You may call or write your local SSA hearing office to let us know if you agree to appear at an online video hearing.

- **Call Us:** You can agree to appear at an online video hearing by calling your local hearing office at the number provided in your hearing notice. We will ask you to provide your name, email address, and cell phone number.
- **Notify Us In Writing:** You can agree to appear at an online video hearing by completing and returning the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Hearing Agreement Form that we

sent with your hearing notice. You also can agree to appear at an online video hearing by sending us a written statement that includes the following information: your name, email address, and cell phone number. You can fax or mail your completed form or written statement to your local hearing office. To find your hearing office’s address and fax number, visit www.ssa.gov/appeals/ho_locator.html.

- **For Representatives:** If a claimant agrees to appear at an online video hearing, his or her appointed representative, if any, must also agree to appear in that manner. An appointed representative should notify us whether both he or she and the claimant agree to appear at an online video hearing. We highly recommend that representatives provide this notification in writing by uploading it directly to the electronic record using Appointed Representative Services.
- **What happens if I do not want to appear at an online video hearing?** We do not require you to participate in an online video hearing if you do not want to do so. If you previously agreed to appear at an online video hearing and then changed your mind, simply call your local hearing office at the number provided in your hearing notice and let us know.

If you do not want to appear at an online video hearing, you have the option of appearing at a hearing by telephone. If you also do not want to appear at a hearing by telephone, we will delay scheduling your hearing, or, if already scheduled, we will postpone your hearing until our offices reopen.

What happens before my online video hearing?

If you agree to appear at an online video hearing, we will email you a link to where you will find instructions about how to access and use the Microsoft Teams application before the hearing. You can also visit www.ssa.gov/appeals/hearings_options.html to view the user guide. Standard message and data charges may apply

To ensure you can participate in an online video hearing using Microsoft Teams, we recommend you complete the following before your hearing begins:

When you receive the invitation email with the hearing link, click the link and test your connection.

- **Personal computer:** If you have a web browser that supports Microsoft Teams, you will see Microsoft Teams open. If your web browser does not support Microsoft Teams, you will be prompted to download the free application. *If you have technical difficulties, contact the hearing office.* To find your hearing office's phone number, visit www.ssa.gov/appeals/ho_locator.html.
- **Mobile device (Apple/Android):** On a mobile device (tablet or cell phone), you will be prompted to download the free Microsoft Teams application.

Disclaimer: Please note that Microsoft Teams is a non-government, third party application. To participate in an online video hearing using Microsoft Teams, you may be asked to agree to Microsoft's terms of use and privacy policies, which we do not control. Our Internet Privacy Policy describes our online information practices and does not apply to Microsoft Teams. You can find our policy at www.ssa.gov/agency/privacy.html.

Before the date of the scheduled online video hearing, we will email you a reminder with the link to your online video hearing. Click the link 15 minutes before the start of your scheduled hearing.

What happens during the online video hearing?

An Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) will conduct the online video hearing in the same manner as in person and telephone hearings. The ALJ will ask you and any witness(es) to take an oath or affirm that your testimony is true. You will have a chance to testify and tell the ALJ about your case, and the ALJ may ask you and any witness(es) questions to help make a decision in your case. You also will have the opportunity to ask questions during the hearing. You will be able to see and hear the ALJ and your representative, if you have one appointed.

Other participants, such as a vocational expert, medical expert, or interpreter, may join the online video hearing by phone.

How can I prepare for my online video hearing?

On the day of the hearing, before your hearing begins, we may call you to confirm that you can access the online video hearing using Microsoft Teams and to provide technical assistance if necessary. You also should:

- Ensure your personal computer or mobile device remains connected to a secure wireless or wired internet connection from a private location (e.g., at your home or office).
- Connect to a nearby power source to charge your computer or mobile device, as needed.
- Notify the ALJ if the camera, microphone, or speakers are not working properly or if you experience any other technical issues during the online video hearing. In the event you become disconnected during your online video hearing, please attempt to reconnect as quickly as possible. If the ALJ is unable to continue the hearing, he or she may reschedule the hearing for a later date.

Please visit the www.ssa.gov/appeals/hearing_options.html webpage for additional information about any technical requirements to appear by video using Microsoft Teams.

Your Privacy Matters

During online video hearings, all employees connect to the hearing using SSA's secure agency network and hardware. The ALJ will conduct the video hearing from his or her personal residence, using a secure internet connection from a private room. To further protect the privacy of hearing participants, we ask that all hearing participants join the hearing from a private location.



Securing today
and tomorrow

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