



**THE SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
STATE OF COLORADO
BENT, CROWLEY, AND OTERO COUNTIES**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
CONCERNING DECORUM FOR
VIRTUAL COURT PROCEEDINGS**

2021-01

In response to the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic, trial courts in the 16th Judicial District introduced virtual court proceedings to decrease the spread of the virus and in the interest of public health and safety. Virtual court is conducted through the Cisco Webex application and allows access to the courts for all parties and observers through audio and visual means. Virtual court proceedings are Courts of Law. Despite the fact the hearing is being conducted via a live WebEx platform, the expectation of the 16th Judicial District Trial Courts is that courtesy will be extended to all parties and respect will be given to the decorum of the Courts.

This Administrative Order is to provide directive regarding decorum to all participants and attendees of virtual courtroom proceedings held in the 16th Judicial District.

THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority granted in Chief Justice Directive 95-01, it is hereby ORDERED as follows:

1. Judicial officers and court staff shall dress in accordance with district dress code policies for appearing in Court. When appearing from the courtroom, judicial officers shall wear robes. When appearing from a remote location, judicial officers may wear business attire when a robe is not appropriate or accessible.
2. Participants, including attorneys, litigants, witnesses, caseworkers, law enforcement, and service providers, shall appear via live video and audio connection from a location that does not provide background noise or images that are disruptive to the proceedings.
 - a. Participants unable to appear by video may request in advance or at the beginning of their hearing to appear by audio only. Judicial officers will have discretion over these requests.
 - b. Examples of disruptions are:
 - i. Appearing while carrying out other responsibilities, either in an office setting or in the community, i.e., while waiting in a line, waiting room, or driving.
 - ii. Background noise or images from a home or job setting, i.e., pets barking or appearing in the background, coworker conversations, or appearing while outdoors where uncontrollable wind and traffic sounds can disrupt the record.
 - iii. Chewing of gum or eating.
 - iv. Failure to silence a device while waiting for a case to be called.

3. Attorneys shall dress in accordance with standards for in-person appearances before the Court.
4. Non-attorney participants in virtual court proceedings shall dress appropriately and in accordance with their agency's policies for appearing in Court.
5. Participants shall make every effort to acquire the necessary applications on their devices to appear via live video and audio connection. The Court will provide a link to the no-cost application on the 16th Judicial District website.
6. Participants will mute their devices upon entering the virtual courtroom and remain muted until addressed by the Court.
7. Failure to comply with this Order will result initially in a verbal warning. Continued violations may result in the rescheduling of the appearance and verbal admonishment from the Court at the discretion of the judicial officer.

SO ORDERED this 26th day of March 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. MacDonnell", written over a horizontal line.

Mark A. MacDonnell, Chief Judge