

JUDGE RIVERA'S PROCEDURES GOVERNING COURT APPEARANCES

The following procedures only apply to hearings before Judge Rivera

Effective October 2, 2025

Except for scheduled hearings in Tampa, **Judge Rivera conducts hearings in Courtroom 4-102, United States Courthouse, 2110 First Street, Fort Myers, Florida..**

All counsel are encouraged to appear in person in Fort Myers for hearings before Judge Rivera. It is Judge Rivera's belief that an attorney's effective representation of his or her client's position may often best be served by an in-person court appearance.

IN-PERSON HEARINGS AND TRIALS.

Attorneys and parties, including parties who are not represented by attorneys, may attend all hearings and trials in person. Unless the Court specifically orders otherwise, the Court will conduct all trials and evidentiary hearings in person.

REMOTE APPEARANCES.

Unless the Court has specially set a matter for an in-person hearing, attorneys and parties, including parties who are not represented by an attorney, may attend all hearings by video or telephone via Zoom. ***Parties may no longer appear by video feed from Tampa.***

In accordance with the broadcast policy of the Judicial Conference of the United States for public access to civil and bankruptcy proceedings effective as of September 22, 2023, no member of the press or the public may observe any hearing by video on Zoom, but members of the press and the public may observe certain non-evidentiary hearings by audio only on Zoom.

Advance Registration Required. To participate in the hearing remotely via Zoom (whether by video or by telephone), you must register in advance no later than 3:00 p.m. one business day before the date of the hearing. To register, click on or enter the following registration link in your computer browser:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/QnLhJgFmQXeVTefP1OPpmQ#/registration>.

Upon registration, Zoom will provide a password-protected link for the Zoom conference. If a party is unable to register for the hearing, please contact the Courtroom Deputy at 813-301-5195 no later than 3:00 p.m. one business day before the date of the hearing. Failure to timely register in accordance with this procedure may result in your being denied access to the hearing via Zoom.

Chapter 11 Cases. "First day" motions will ordinarily be considered preliminary, non-evidentiary hearings. However, if any attorney or party anticipates presenting evidence or cross-examining any witness at any hearing, then the attorney or party must appear in person.

Conduct During Hearing. All participants must mute electronic devices and disable all audible alerts while on Zoom. Although conducted using remote conferencing technology, the hearing is a court proceeding, and the formalities of the courtroom must always be observed. Counsel and parties must dress appropriately, exercise civility, and otherwise conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the dignity of the Court. For hearings with multiple matters set at the same time, participants attending by video conference should keep their cameras off until their matter is called, at which time they should turn on their cameras for their particular hearing, and then turn them off again after their matter has concluded.

Persons participating remotely must:

- i. test their equipment and internet connection prior to the hearing to ensure it is operating properly;
- ii. ensure that the display name shown on Zoom is their full name;
- iii. state their name each time they speak;
- iv. speak audibly, clearly, and slowly; and
- v. mute their microphone when not talking.

Failure to comply with these guidelines, including equipment or internet connection failures, may result in the Court disconnecting your line and continuing the hearing without you.

Please note that when appearing remotely, you are connected directly with the sound system in the courtroom and will be able to hear all activity before the Court just as if you were in the courtroom. As with appearances in person, you must wait for the courtroom deputy to call the case, at which point appearances will be permitted. The Court always takes appearances by Zoom first and then in the courtroom. It is your responsibility to listen for your case to be called. At the conclusion of your matter, you may disconnect from the Zoom meeting without requesting to be excused.

NOTICES OF HEARING.

A sample Notice of Hearing is available in the Court's Procedure Manual located on The Source on the Court's website ([Click HERE](#)). If you are instructed to prepare and serve notice of a hearing, you must include the following language—

The Court will conduct the hearing in person. Parties are directed to consult Judge Rivera's *Procedures Governing Court Appearances*, available at <https://www.flmb.uscourts.gov/judges/rivera>, regarding policies and procedures for attendance at hearings by video or telephone via Zoom. If you are unable to access the Court's website, please contact the Courtroom Deputy at 813-301-5195 no later than 3:00 p.m. one business day before the date of the hearing.