

77-3. Remote Public Access to Proceedings in Civil Cases [Revised]

- (a) **Generally allowed at judge’s discretion.** To the extent not prohibited by statute, the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Ninth Circuit Judicial Council Policy, or this Local Rule, judges of this Court may, in their discretion, provide the public with remote video or audio access to court proceedings in civil cases. This applies to proceedings conducted in the courtroom as well as proceedings where the judge and/or the attorneys are appearing remotely.
- (b) **Prohibitions on provision of remote access.**
 - (1) Remote public access will not be permitted where doing so would risk interfering with the integrity of the proceedings. This includes, but is not limited to, situations where remote public access would risk infringing on privacy interests, creating safety concerns, or materially affecting witness testimony.
 - (2) Remote public video access to civil jury trials is prohibited.
- (c) **Objections to or requests for provision of public access.** Objections to the provision of remote public access by any party, witness, or person who is a subject of the proceeding, and requests by members of the public to provide remote public access, will be considered by the presiding judge. Parties to the case should file objections or requests by way of administrative motion pursuant to Civil Local Rule 7-11. Nonparties should make objections or requests using the form on the Court’s website. Absent a showing of good cause, any objection or request must be submitted at least 14 days before the proceeding.
- (d) **No capture or transmission of remote access permitted.** Persons with remote access to court proceedings are prohibited from recording, photographing, or retransmitting those proceedings.

Commentary

The Judicial Conference of the United States has published a policy against the video “broadcast” of court proceedings. This appears intended to apply to hearings where remote video access is provided over a platform such as Zoom. This policy is not binding on the courts; it is a recommendation that is owed respectful consideration. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 331; *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, 558 U.S. 183, 193 (2010); *see also, e.g., United States v. Slone*, 969 F. Supp. 2d 830, 834–35 (E.D. Ky. 2013); *United States v. Crusius*, 2020 WL 4340550, at *6 (W.D. Tex. July 28, 2020). The Judicial Conference policy approves providing remote audio access to civil and bankruptcy hearings that do not involve witness testimony. The Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, whose policies are binding within the Circuit, has left the decision about whether and how to provide remote video access to the district courts.

This Court has carefully considered the recommendation of the Judicial Conference but has determined based on its own experience from 2020 to 2023 that, except in very rare circumstances, providing the media and the public with remote video access improves transparency and confidence in judicial proceedings without having any negative effect on those proceedings. Additionally, the public’s interest in access to the courts is better served by providing video access as opposed to audio-only access, particularly in cases where the judge and attorneys are also appearing remotely rather than from the courtroom.

This Court has determined that public audio access to civil jury trials is permissible while public video access is not. Remote public access to criminal trials (and all other criminal proceedings) is restricted by Rule 54 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.