

Board of Finance and Revenue Remote Public Hearings Videoconferencing Protocol and Instructions

The Board of Finance and Revenue is offering taxpayers and the Department of Revenue (parties) the opportunity to participate in public hearings via video communications technology.

At this time, parties will not appear in person for public hearings designated by the Board to be held remotely. All remote hearings will be either by teleconference or videoconference. The remote hearings will be held at designated times indicated in the final hearing schedule. Each party must designate one representative to argue on behalf of the party. The designated representative must provide the Board with an email address that the Board will use to send important information about the oral argument session.

Representatives are advised to monitor their spam or junk email folder so as not to miss any important information from the Board. Email messages from the Board will come from an “@patreasury.gov” email address.

The following instructions are intended to apply to TEAMS videoconference hearings. Screen sharing will not be permitted during videoconference hearings.

Minimum Technology Requirements for Presenting Argument

The Board uses Microsoft TEAMS to host remote oral argument sessions. Parties presenting oral argument before the Board by TEAMS must have one of the following:

1. A computer with a functioning web camera, microphone, and speakers;
2. A tablet device that supports Microsoft TEAMS with a functioning forward facing camera, microphone, and speakers; or
3. An alternative device that has been used to connect to Microsoft TEAMS in the past.

Getting Started With Microsoft TEAMS

If you do not have the TEAMS application on your computer or device, you should download it in advance of the date of your scheduled hearings. The application may be downloaded from: [Download Microsoft Teams Desktop and Mobile Apps](#)

[| Microsoft Teams](#) . Microsoft Teams is also a free download in the Apple App and Google Play Stores.

If possible, the Board recommends that you also download in advance of the date of your scheduled hearing the Microsoft TEAMS application onto a smart phone or other device that connects to a data plan. This will provide a backup device in case you encounter internet connectivity problems with your primary device. If you are not familiar with TEAMS, the Board recommends that you review the instructions that Microsoft provides on its website.

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/join-a-teams-meeting-078e9868-f1aa-4414-8bb9-ee88e9236ee4>

Using TEAMS and Preparing for Your Oral Argument

Close All Other Applications on Your Computer

1. To maintain a strong connection, all other applications on your computer should be closed, including browsers (e.g., Chrome, Internet Explorer, etc.), your email (e.g., Outlook, Gmail, etc.), and calendar. This also will prevent any applications from inadvertently making sounds during the argument (such as email alert chimes)

2. Lighting

Sit Facing a Light Source

Sitting with your back to a window or bright light source reduces the video's quality by creating a harsh silhouette effect. Whenever possible, sit facing a window, a desk lamp, or other light source so that your face is well illuminated and clearly visible.

3. Camera

Locate your device's camera and make sure the lens is not blocked. Position the camera as close to eye level as possible rather than tilting your screen. Consider propping your device on books to elevate it. Make sure that your head and shoulders are visible on the camera.

4. Test Audio & Video

Configure and test your audio and video prior to joining the TEAMS session. Locate the Mute button/icon and familiarize yourself with how to turn it on and off. **During oral argument keep the Mute button on unless you need to speak.**

5. Plug in Computer

If connecting from a laptop, plug the laptop into wall power.

6. Cellular Telephone

If you join the TEAMS meeting using your cellular telephone, use *6 to unmute. Use *5 to “raise your hand” if you need to speak with the meeting organizer who will address you during breaks between hearings.

Protocols During the TEAMS Oral Argument

1. Representative Access by TEAMS Conference Link

Each party must designate one representative to appear and argue on behalf of the party. The designated representative must provide the Board with an email address that the Board will use to send a conference link to join the TEAMS session.

2. Joining Your TEAMS Session

Using the link provided by the Board, designated arguing representative must join the TEAMS session 15 minutes before the scheduled start time. When joining the session, you will be prompted to enter your name. You must input your name. This is the name that the Board staff will use to identify you and match you with your case, and it will appear on the TEAMS screen.

3. TEAMS Lobby

When you join the TEAMS oral argument session, you automatically will be placed in the “Lobby,” a virtual waiting room where you will remain until the Board staff (the “organizer”) admits you. You will not see other participants while waiting in the lobby.

4. First Steps When You Are Moved From the Virtual Lobby to the Oral Argument Session

When you are moved from the lobby to the argument, be sure to disable your camera and mute your microphone until your case is called. If you are using a smart phone, turn the phone horizontally to see more participants in the view.

The MUTE button must be on when you are not addressing the Board. If you do not mute yourself, Board staff will mute you. This is necessary to prevent feedback noise and to record a clear argument. Board staff will ask you in turn to unmute and activate your camera.

5. Stay muted until you are recognized by the Board.

6. Watch the Board members at all times; they will indicate when they want to ask a question and will unmute to speak. You should be in mute status while the Board member asks the question, and then unmute to respond. Pauses during the muting and unmuting process are expected.

7. Remain facing forward near the microphone throughout your argument.

8. Be aware of your behavior. Because you are on a video conference, when your camera is on, people can see what you are doing at all times and TEAMS video sessions are recorded.

9. Representatives should dress professionally for the remote argument as they would if appearing before the Board in person.

Technical Assistance

The Board's staff will provide technical assistance to representatives. If you suddenly lose connection or if you have issues with your audio during your session, you may be asked to log out and then log back in. If you experience connectivity problems, TEAMS might automatically limit your video capability. The audio portion of your session is the most critical. The Board may choose to complete your hearing by audio only. If your technical issues persist, your hearing will be automatically rescheduled for the next scheduled audio hearing in the same month, if possible.

If you have a problem at any time while preparing for or during oral argument, you may call or email our Administrative Team, to request technical assistance: 717-787-2974 or BFR@patreasury.gov.