



Judicial Branch Policy and Procedures

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Title:	Remote & In-person Hearings Policy
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Remote & In-person Hearings Policy

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Minnesota Judicial Branch to have a uniform process for determining whether a court proceeding is heard remotely or in-person.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all district courts.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. In-Person Hearing – A hearing at which all parties/attorneys are physically present in the courtroom.
- B. Remote Hearing – A hearing at which no parties/attorneys are physically present in the courtroom.
- C. Hybrid Hearing – A hearing at which some parties/attorneys appear in person and others appear remotely. These hearings may occur as the result of an exception from the default hearing appearance setting.

IV. PROCESS

A. Remote or In-Person Hearings

- 1. All hearings shall be conducted either remotely or in-person, as provided in the attached table, unless an exception listed in IV.B. applies.

B. Exceptions

- 1. **Case-by-case exceptions.** Based on factors present on a specific case, a judicial officer may exercise discretion to deviate from the default hearing appearance type on a case-by-case basis. A request for a case-by-case exception may be made by a party or initiated by the court. No motion is required. Judicial officers are not required to provide findings but may do so. Case-by-case exceptions may not be used to create a blanket deviation.

2. **Agency, district, county, or division-wide hearing appearance type deviations.** Deviations to default appearance types may be approved, as determined by Judicial Council, in certain circumstances, including: proximity to justice partner facilities, access to legal representation, access to community and partner services, innovation, performance measures and prolonged emergency circumstances.

V. IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the State Court Administrator, acting as the Judicial Council's agent, and the Chief Judges of the Judicial Districts.

VI. EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS

None.

Default Hearing Appearance Types

Area of Focus	Default Hearing Setting	Unless the Hearing is Listed Below
Adult Criminal - Mandatory Court Appearance Required	In person	Remote: All initial appearances (e.g., First Appearance, Arraignment, Bail Hearing, Initial Appearance - Rule 8, Initial Probation Violation)
Adult Criminal – Non-mandatory Court Appearance Required	Remote	
Treatment Court	In person	
Juvenile Delinquency – Felonies, Gross-, and Misdemeanor-Level of Offenses	In person	Remote: All initial appearances (e.g., First Appearance, Arraignment, Detention Hearing)
Juvenile Delinquency – Petty and Traffic	Remote	
Civil Other	Remote	In Person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidentiary hearings • Hearings intended for settlement • Trials
Housing	Remote	In Person: Jury trials
Conciliation	Remote	
Civil Commitments	Remote	In Person: Commitment hearings and court trials where the commitment may be indeterminant
Guardianship & Conservatorship	Remote	
Probate	Remote	
CHIPS	Remote	In Person: Trials
Family	Remote	In Person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidentiary hearings • Hearings intended for settlement • Trials
Adoption	In person	
Expedited Process	Remote	
OFP/HRO	In Person: All subsequent hearings	Remote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial appearances • Motion to amend/extend hearings