

## **General Notice for Hearing through Video Conferencing**

1. Presently the viral pandemic has adversely impacted the conduct of proceedings, before the Commission. It is in this context, that the Commission deems it necessary to provide an access to all stakeholders, to the Commission, by conducting proceedings, remotely, by the use of audio and video enabled hearings.
2. Therefore, during the on-going pandemic (Covid-19), the Commission will hear cases in Virtual Court Room through Google Meet Video conferencing platform.
3. The parties/Advocates or representatives may attend hearing from their respective office/home using Google Meet. In case a party finds it difficult to attend hearing from his office/home, he may use facility of e-hearing available in DERC Court Room. **However, this facility should be avoided and can be used only in the case of extreme difficulty in attending e-hearing from his office/home. Only two persons per party will be allowed in the court room. In either case hearing will be conducted through virtual mode only and no face to face meeting/hearing is allowed. Such consumers/Representatives should inform the Secretary/ Joint Director (Law) vide e-mail a day before the hearing and a time slot will be provided to them in which they are to appear and if they do not appear in that time slot they will not be allowed to appear in the e-hearing.**
4. All notifications/guidelines including the cause-list of the Petitions to be heard through Video Conferencing will be published on the website of the Commission ([www.derc.gov.in](http://www.derc.gov.in))
5. The e-hearing of the petitions shall commence at 3.00 p.m on the day of the hearing. The Monthly Cause list shall be posted on the Commissions Website and final cause list shall be posted on the Commissions website by 5.00 pm on the previous day of the hearing, indicating the details of the Petitions listed.

6. The parties whose petitions have been listed for e-hearing shall inform well in advance, the name of the party representatives and/or the Advocates, who has been authorised to appear/present the case, along with contact address, phone number and e-mail id (gmail account).
7. Only those documents/pleadings can be referred during the hearing which have already been filed before the Commission two days prior to the hearing with a copy served upon the opposite party (parties). Accordingly, the parties to a petition are required to file documents/pleadings till 4.00 pm either through e-mail to the Secretary or through Registry of the Commission, two days prior to the date of e-hearing and in no circumstances this would be relaxed.
8. Adjournments will not be permitted in respect of the petitions listed for hearing through Video Conferencing on the day of hearing. Any request for adjournment of their petitions, shall be made well in advance through e mail to the Secretary office of the Commission.
9. Advocates/party representatives are requested to familiarize themselves with the Google Meet Video conferencing platform so that they are well-prepared.
10. The presenting Advocate/Party Representative, before beginning their respective submissions, may identify themselves and confirm that they are authorized to represent the concerned party.
11. The Advocates appearing and presenting their cases via the Video Conferencing platform must observe the dress code and etiquette prescribed under the Advocates Act, 1961.
12. The Advocates/Party Representatives shall be seated in appropriately in ambient surroundings ensuring that there is no background noise or disturbance (like ringing of mobile phones, background chatter, etc.)
13. The Advocates/Party Representative should use earphones/headsets. It will be the responsibility of the Advocates/Party Representatives to ensure that discipline is maintained at their respective ends, and no inconvenience or disturbance is caused during the proceedings.

14. The Advocates/Party Representative have to keep their respective devices/microphones on mute at all times and un-mute the same only when their respective turn to present their case or to interject arises. The Advocates/Party Representatives are requested to avoid interjections altogether and may do so only when absolutely essential, with the leave of the Commission.
15. When questions/issues are being raised by the Commission, the Advocates/Party Representative concerned shall remain patient and respond only upon the Commission completing its questions/issues. It is advisable that the Counsel/Advocate/Party Representative concerned wait for a few seconds, after the Commission has completed the question, before proceeding to respond.
16. The administrator of the Video Conferencing will ensure that only such Advocates/Party Representatives are audible and visible who are arguing the particular matter. The other Advocate/Party Representatives will have to wait for their respective turn.
17. Recording of the Video Conferencing, whether in part or full is prohibited. No virtual courtroom proceedings, or part thereof, shall be disseminated or otherwise presented by the counsel, advocates, litigants, general public and journalists, etc. for publication or reproduction to the media or any other person. Any infraction of this proscription will be dealt with strictly in accordance with law.
18. The overall control and administrative privileges over the virtual courtroom and video conferencing platform, subject to the instructions of the Commission, will be exercised by the Secretary/designated official of the Commission.
19. Any complaint in regard to the quality or audibility of feed shall be communicated by the parties to the Secretary/designated official of the commission during the proceedings or immediately after its conclusion, failing which no grievance in this regard shall be entertained thereafter.

20. Parties are required to stay online till Commission concludes the hearing of their matter. If connectivity link goes down at Server level due to unforeseen and unavoidable technological issues, then the Commission will adjourn the hearing and will reschedule the hearing as per the convenient date and time of the Commission and the parties will be intimated accordingly through e-mail.
21. On the conclusion of e-hearing, or in accordance with the directions of the Commission, the contesting parties shall file their respective final written submissions through e-mail as well as in original within the time limit specified by the Commission.
22. Advocates/Party Representatives may submit a mentioning-application well in advance, by e-mail to the Secretary, for early hearing through Video Conferencing mode indicating the Urgency. The mentioning application must inter-alia clearly contain the case details, the urgency involved along with the contact details of the Advocates/Party Representatives like e-mail ID, mobile number with alternate number(s) if any. The request will be examined by the Commission and if considered necessary, the concerned party will be informed of the date of hearing of the matter.
23. Any person can file fresh petition/reply/documents to the registry between 11 A.M to 4.00 P.M on working days. Fresh Petitions should be filed along with the soft copy of the petition. A separate soft copy containing synopsis and prayer shall also be filed along with the petition.