



PROCEDURE TO ADDRESS CIVIL AND FAMILY MATTERS VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

REVISED APRIL 20, 2020

In order to protect the community and Judicial Branch staff, as well as further judicial proceedings where viable, the videoconference system was extended for use in civil and family law cases.

IMPORTANT DETAILS:

- Although hearings in the courtrooms are still suspended until May 1, 2020, this initiative will allow courts to hold evidentiary and non-evidentiary hearings through the videoconference system, at the parties' request or upon court order. This mechanism shall be adopted, provided that the parties' counsel or pro se litigants have the necessary technology at their disposal and where their circumstances allow it.
- The videoconference system will not be used to hear cases relating to mortgage foreclosures, evictions, cases under Civil Procedure Rule 60 (debt collection), and child support contempt hearings.
- Motions to schedule a videoconference hearing in cases not docketed in SUMAC (e-filing system) may be submitted to the following emails:

- **Aguadilla** sumacaguadilla@ramajudicial.pr
- **Aibonito** sumacaibonito@ramajudicial.pr
- **Arecibo** sumacarecibo@ramajudicial.pr
- **Bayamón** sumacbayamon@ramajudicial.pr
- **Caguas** sumaccaguas@ramajudicial.pr
- **Carolina** sumaccarolina@ramajudicial.pr
- **Fajardo** sumacfajardo@ramajudicial.pr
- **Guayama** sumacguayama@ramajudicial.pr
- **Humacao** sumachumacao@ramajudicial.pr
- **Mayagüez** sumacmayaguez@ramajudicial.pr
- **Ponce** sumacponce@ramajudicial.pr
- **San Juan** sumacsanjuan@ramajudicial.pr
- **Utua** sumacutuado@ramajudicial.pr

- Appearance through videoconference will require the following tools:
 - a. High-speed Internet.
 - b. Computer, tablet, or smartphone.
 - c. *Skype for Business* or *Skype* for videoconferences installed in any of the aforementioned devices.
 - d. Email address (legal counsel must use the email address registered in the Master Roll of Attorneys, RUA).
- Judges are currently identifying those cases which, due to the present stage of the proceedings, may be heard remotely and have already started to issue orders to invite the parties therein to a videoconference hearing.
- If videoconferencing is not a viable alternative, the parties' counsel or the parties appearing pro se shall so inform the Court within the term granted in the Order. Suspension fees will not be levied for this motion.
- The videoconference invitation will be sent to the parties' counsel by email at the address registered in the Master Roll of Attorneys (RUA). For parties appearing pro se, it will be sent to the email address included in the judicial record or that which they have notified through motion. Instructions to join the videoconference will also be included in said message.
- In the case of an evidentiary hearing, parties' counsel and parties appearing pro se must notify the email address of any witnesses, so they may be joined in the videoconference.
- Those who will participate in the hearing must join, through the link sent, at least 5 minutes before the videoconference is set to begin. This allows time to ensure there are no technical issues affecting the proceeding.
- For an evidentiary hearing, the judge will order counsel to upload all documentary evidence in the electronic record before the hearing. Pro se litigants must send all documentary evidence via email before the hearing.
- Any term granted during the videoconference hearing is subject to the provisions of Resolution EM-2020-07 issued by the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, unless the parties voluntarily wish to further the proceedings before May 18, through which date all judicial terms have been extended.

Should you experience any technical difficulty or have a question, you must file a motion in a timely manner. For other questions, you may call the Judicial Branch Helpline at 787-641-6229. For technical support, please call 787-641-6225.