

HONORABLE D. THOMAS FERRARO
U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE
GUIDELINES FOR CONFERENCES ON ZOOM

Updated: January 8, 2025

The Court will use its Zoom video conferencing account to host the ENE and CMC.¹ ***If you are unfamiliar with Zoom:*** Zoom is available on computers through a download on the Zoom website (<https://zoom.us/meetings>) or on mobile devices through the installation of a free app.² Joining a Zoom conference does not require creating a Zoom account, but it does require downloading the .exe file (if using a computer) or the app (if using a mobile device). Participants are encouraged to create an account, install Zoom, and familiarize themselves with Zoom in advance of the ENE.³ There is a cost-free option for creating a Zoom account.

Before the start of the ENE, the Court will email each participant an invitation to join a Zoom video conference. Participants shall join the video conference by following the ZoomGov Meeting hyperlink in the invitation. ***Participants who do not have Zoom already installed on their device when they click on the ZoomGov Meeting hyperlink will be prompted to download and install Zoom before proceeding.*** Zoom may then prompt participants to enter the password included in the invitation. All participants will be placed in a waiting room until the ENE begins.

Each participant should plan to join the Zoom video conference ***at least five minutes before*** the start of the ENE to ensure that the conference begins on time. ***The Zoom e-mail invitation may indicate an earlier start time, but the ENE will begin at the time scheduled by the Court.*** Zoom's functionalities will allow the Court to conduct the ENE as it ordinarily would conduct an in-person one. The Court will divide participants into separate, confidential sessions, which Zoom calls Breakout Rooms.⁴ In a Breakout Room, the Court will be able to communicate with participants from a single party in confidence. Breakout Rooms will also allow parties and counsel to communicate confidentially outside the presence of the Court.

¹ The parties may request the ENE and CMC be converted to an in-person conference informally by placing a joint call to chambers or lodging a joint email to efile_Ferraro@casd.uscourts.gov. Counsel must meet and confer prior to any such request.

² Participants are encouraged to use laptops or desktop computers for the video conference, if possible, as mobile devices often offer inferior performance.

³ For help getting started with Zoom, visit: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697-Getting-Started>.

⁴ For more information on what to expect when participating in a Zoom Breakout Room, visit: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005769646>.

No later than one week prior to the ENE, counsel for each party shall send an e-mail to the Court at efile_Ferraro@casd.uscourts.gov containing the following:

- a. The ***name and title of each participant***, including all parties and party representatives with full settlement authority, claims adjusters for insured defendants, and the primary attorney(s) responsible for the litigation;
- b. An ***e-mail address for each participant*** to receive the Zoom video conference invitation; and
- c. A ***telephone number where each participant*** may be reached so that if technical difficulties arise, the Court will be in a position to proceed telephonically instead of by video conference. (If counsel prefers to have all participants of their party on a single conference call, counsel may provide a conference number and appropriate call-in information, including an access code, where all counsel and parties or party representatives for that side may be reached as an alternative to providing individual telephone numbers for each participant.)

Counsel must be responsible for ensuring their clients are able to participate in the ENE. All participants shall display the same level of professionalism during the ENE and be prepared to devote their full attention to the ENE as if they were attending in person (*e.g.*, participants may not be driving or otherwise distracted while speaking to the Court). Because Zoom may quickly deplete the battery of a participant's device, each participant should ensure that their device is plugged in or that a charging cable is readily available during the video conference.