

VIDEO CONFERENCE HEARINGS & YOU

What is a Video-Conferencing or 'VC' hearing?

Video Conferencing is the technology that allows you to attend your case hearing in Court, from the prison premises.

Where is the VC hearing held?

VC hearing is held in a 'VC room' set up in the prison. A VC room usually has a computer or a TV-like screen, camera, microphone and speakers. A similar VC system is installed in the Courtroom.

How will you appear before the Court?

Through audio and video shared via the camera and microphone attached to the computer or TV-like screen in the VC room setup in the prison.

Will your lawyer also attend VC hearing?

Yes, it is mandatory that your lawyer is present in Court during your VC hearing.



What generally happens before the VC hearing?

- ▶ **You will be informed** by the prison authorities that you would be produced through VC on the day and time decided by the concerned judge.
- ▶ **Before the VC hearing**, you would be asked to sit/stand before the computer or the TV-like screen with an attached camera.
- ▶ **If you are having trouble** in seeing or hearing the Court on the screen, ask the person-in-charge of the VC room in the prison to help you.
- ▶ **You should try and communicate** with your lawyer either through telephone or through your family (where facility is available in the prison) or other permissible means to understand any specifics of the hearing or share any instructions you may have for your lawyer.

Can you request for a physical hearing in Court?

Yes, you can request for a physical hearing in Court either through an application filed by your lawyer or through an application filed through the prison legal aid clinic stating reasons for seeking a physical hearing. If your VC hearing has resulted in an adverse order in your case, this can also be a ground for seeking a physical appearance in Court. However, the judge may decide to allow or disallow your application.

If you have a complaint or feedback regarding the VC hearing, who can you approach?

You have the right to share your complaints or feedback regarding the VC hearing. You may submit your complaint/feedback to the Court, where your case is pending, through:

- ▶ your lawyer, or
- ▶ the prison legal aid clinic or a representative of the District Legal Services Authority, or
- ▶ the prison authorities, or
- ▶ your family/friends, or
- ▶ directly to the Court during the hearing requesting permission to share your complaint/feedback.



Will you be allowed to speak to the judge during the VC hearing?

Yes, you have the right to speak to the judge during the VC hearings, with their permission. You must inform the judge:

- ▶ if you do not have a lawyer and need a legal aid lawyer to be appointed;
- ▶ if you cannot see your lawyer on the screen and wish to ensure his/her presence on-screen;
- ▶ if you think that your lawyer has misrepresented you during the hearing;
- ▶ if you haven't been able to communicate with your lawyer and wish to discuss something confidentially before or during the hearing;
- ▶ if you are not able to follow the Court proceedings, you can seek clarifications and copies of documents produced;
- ▶ if you have any problem in prison or you are facing any form of threat or coercion in prison, you should request the judge that you wish to discuss something confidentially;
- ▶ any other issue that you wish to inform the judge.

For any other doubts or queries regarding Video Conferencing hearings, please talk to your lawyer or legal aid lawyer/paralegal volunteer at the jail legal aid clinic or representative of the District Legal Services Authority.



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