

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
Administrative Order  
4JD-029-2020

Pursuant to the authority vested in me, in accordance with the recent operational protocols issued by the Chief Administrative Judge for the trial courts of the Unified Court System, and after consultation with the Chief Administrative Judge and the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, and

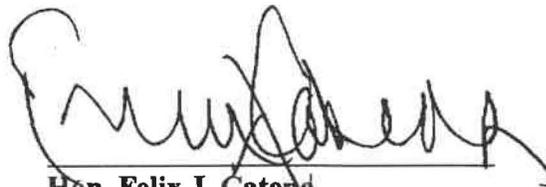
WHEREAS, New York State and the nation are now in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis surrounding the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus); and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is known to be a highly infectious disease, and there is much community concern that large gatherings of people can result in greater public exposure to possible contagion or "community spread"; and

WHEREAS, on a daily basis, in courts across the State, hundreds if not thousands of people representing a broad cross-section of the community gather to conduct business in large groups in close proximity to one another, it is hereby

ORDERED that effective April 6, 2020 the attached Virtual Courtroom Protocol shall be put into effect in all Counties of the Fourth Judicial District which shall amend, in part, Administrative Order 4JD-013-2020 dated March 16, 2020 insofar as it pertains to the duty judge being physically present in the courtroom.

Dated: April 2, 2020  
Fonda, New York



**Hon. Felix J. Catena**  
**Administrative Judge**  
**Fourth Judicial District**

cc: Hon. Vito C. Caruso, DCAJ

## **FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT VIRTUAL COURTROOM PROCEDURES**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor has mandated reductions in the number of locations open to the public and in the density of people at those locations. The Chief Judge of the State of New York, in furtherance of this mandate, has directed that court operations be consolidated into one "Central Courthouse" in each county, and has directed further that the Central Courthouses only accept filings in "essential matters". A list of essential matters is contained in Administrative Order 78/20 of Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence Marks. A copy is attached (Attachment A).

Now, as the pandemic intensifies, there is a need to institute additional measures to further reduce courthouse density in a continuing effort to reduce disease transmission. Accordingly, effective **Monday, April 6, 2020**, the Fourth Judicial District will begin hearing all essential matters virtually, via videoconferencing.

### **1. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**a. Central Courthouse Locations and Hours:** The Central Courthouses in each county will remain open from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday-Friday. A list of Central Courthouses, their physical addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses, is attached (Attachment B).

**b. Central Courthouse Staffing:** During business hours, each Central Courthouse will be staffed with a minimum number of Court Clerks. They will be available to answer public inquiries and to accept and process essential matters. They will also schedule and facilitate necessary videoconferences. Court Officers will also be present to ensure safety.

**c. Duty Judges:** Duty Judges are assigned on a rotating schedule to handle all essential matters. However, unless there is insufficient internet connectivity between the Central Courthouse and the Duty Judge's remote location, the Duty Judge will not be physically present in the Central Courthouse. The Judge will be available via remote connection with the Central Courthouse, will review cases electronically and preside over essential matters via videoconference.

**d. All Essential Matters to be Heard via Videoconference:** Unless exempted for good cause (see below), all essential proceedings shall be heard by the Duty Judge remotely, via videoconferencing.

**e. Parties' Consent to Video Appearances:** At every appearance, best efforts shall be used to obtain the parties' consent to appearing via videoconference.

**f. Videoconference Platform:** The videoconference platform used by the Unified Court System to facilitate all remote court proceedings is Skype for Business. An information sheet which contains frequently asked questions about accessing and using Skype for Business is attached (Attachment C).

**g. Facilitating Video Appearances:** Court Clerks at each Central Courthouse will initiate and facilitate all videoconferences. This will be done from a specifically designated courtroom or courtrooms in the Central Courthouse. All other necessary parties will participate in the court proceedings from remote locations via the Skype for Business connection.

**h. Telephonic Appearances:** The videoconference "invitation" sent by the Court Clerk to initiate the Skype for Business videoconference will also contain a telephone number for participants. This "call-in" number can be used by parties to attend the proceedings, in lieu of a video appearance. This is only to be used if a party is unable to access Skype for Business or is having difficulty securing a video connection due to poor internet connectivity at his or her end.

**IMPORTANT:** Broadband internet access of sufficient quality is necessary. If there is no broadband access where a party is located, he or she will only be able to participate by voice; there will be no ability to see the other participants or to be seen by them.

For those who do have broadband access, the quality of the Skype for Business videoconference depends directly upon the adequacy of internet service for each person who is participating. In many regions of the District, broadband internet service is poor or marginal, either because the service itself is limited or because the volume of internet traffic at the time results in slow data transmission speeds for particular participants. If so, it may negatively impact the quality of the connection for everyone else on the call. As a result, the quality of the connection will be assessed by the Duty Judge at the beginning of each videoconference and parties will be directed to use the telephone link if the Judge determines that the quality of a particular connection is so limited that it is causing resonance or latency which impacts the ability of other participants to see, to hear and to be heard.

**i. Confidential Attorney-Client Communications:** At every videoconference, counsel will be able to conduct confidential communications with clients during the proceedings. The party needing to confer confidentially simply notifies the Duty Judge. The Judge will direct counsel and the client to disconnect from the call and reconnect after the conversation has concluded. The FTR recording will remain on during this time to ensure that the confidential communication was not heard by others on the call and to ensure that no ex parte communication occurred during the time the others had disconnected from the link.

**j. Self-Represented Litigants:** If the proceeding involves a self-represented litigant who is not in custody, he or she will be encouraged to appear remotely as well. If not possible, such litigant will be permitted to appear, either from a designated room in the Central Courthouse, or in the courtroom itself.

**k. Interpreter Services:** Should interpreting services be needed, a court interpreter will be contacted and will appear remotely as well. If no court interpreter is available, the Court Clerk will facilitate interpretation by contacting the Language Line and facilitating the connection at the court end.

**l. Recording of Videoconference Proceedings:** All videoconference proceedings will be recorded, either via live stenography with a court reporter attending remotely through the videoconference link, or through use of the Unified Court System's FTR digital recording software. If digital recording is used, the Court Clerk will operate the FTR equipment from the courtroom. There are designated courtrooms in each Central Courthouse which are fully capable of hosting a Skype for Business videoconference. Each is equipped with a large monitor to display video, as well as an integrated sound system which allows audio recording directly through the courtroom's sound system.

**m. Press and Public Access to Courtroom:** The Press, as well as members of the public, will be permitted access to the courtroom where the videoconference is occurring and will have access to the video and audio of the proceedings. Press inquiries should be directed to the Chief Clerk in the Central Courthouse, who will, in turn, contact the Duty Judge to determine if cameras will be permitted in the courtroom, applying existing law and rules. Access to the courtroom may be restricted as necessary in order to comply with density restrictions and to meet the six-foot perimeter required to be maintained under current social distancing directives.

**n. Backup Telephone Access in Courtroom:** Each designated courtroom shall have a dedicated telephone to use as a backup should difficulties be encountered with the videoconference link.

**o. Exceptions to Videoconferencing:** If there is a need for an exception to these videoconference policies, the Chief Clerk or the Duty Judge shall notify the Administrative Judge who will determine if an exception is to be made.

**p. Signage:** Signage shall be placed at the entrance to each Central Courthouse notifying litigants, the Press and the public of the existence of this videoconferencing policy and indicating that the courthouse remains open to the public, albeit with the understanding that required social distancing must be maintained at all times.

**q. Technical Support:** Technical support is available to all videoconference users by contacting the Fourth District's HelpDesk at 1-518-285-5080. It is staffed during business hours.

## **2. NECESSARY EQUIPMENT FOR THOSE PARTICIPATING IN VIDEOCONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

### ***a. Police Stations, County Jails, NYS Correctional Facilities, Mental Health Facilities, Youth Detention Facilities:***

- computer with a camera, microphone and speaker
- scanner which is configured to scan from the computer (if needed in order to scan initial paperwork and to confirm receipt of TOP's)
- printer which is configured to print from the computer (if needed in order to print signed orders emailed from the Court)
- telephone for confidential attorney-client communications

- broadband internet access
- ability to participate in a Skype for Business conference call
- e-mail address accessible from the computer (so Court Clerk can send the Skype invite and any signed orders)

***b. Attorneys and Government Agencies (including District Attorneys, Public Defenders, 18-b Attorneys, Attorneys for the Child, County Attorneys, Departments of Social Services, Attorney General, MHLS attorneys)***

- computer with a camera, microphone and speaker
- scanner for electronic submission of petitions, Orders to Show Cause and other necessary paperwork
- broadband internet access
- ability to participate in a Skype for Business conference call
- telephone
- e-mail address accessible from the computer (so Court Clerk can send any initial paperwork, the Skype invite and any signed orders)

***c. Judge:***

- computer with a camera, microphone and speaker
- broadband internet access
- telephone

***d. Court Clerk:***

- computer in office and in courtroom
- videoconference setup in courtroom with FTR and integrated phone system
- scanners which are configured to scan to and from both computers
- printers which are configured to print to and from both computers
- dedicated telephone in courtroom and in office to communicate with all parties, as needed

### **3. VIDEOCONFERENCING PROCEDURES FOR SPECIFIC CASE TYPES**

#### **A. ADULT AND YOUTH ARRAIGNMENTS DURING BUSINESS HOURS**

In all Fourth District counties:

(a). Arresting Agencies will call the Central Courthouse to advise that arraignment is necessary. After that, the Agency will transmit the initial paperwork to the Court electronically, directing it to a dedicated court email address. Court telephone numbers and email addresses are set forth in Attachment B.

(b). The Court Clerk will re-confirm with the Arresting Agency the email address to send the Skype videoconference link.

(c). The Court Clerk will call the on-call ADA and the on-call Public Defender (or other additional persons in the case of a youth arraignment, including the Probation Department) and transmit the paperwork to each, directing it to a specified email address, as previously determined and agreed. For youth arraignments, the arresting agency will also provide the Court Clerk with contact information for the youth's parent or guardian.

(d). The Court Clerk will create a case file, call the Duty Judge and transmit the paperwork electronically to the Judge's court email address.

(e). The Court Clerk will initiate the Skype invitation by emailing the Skype videoconference link to the email addresses previously determined and re-confirmed.

(f). If there is no court reporter, the Court Clerk will operate the FTR recording equipment directly from the courtroom.

(g). After the proceeding has concluded, the Duty Judge will confer with the Court Clerk regarding the completion of necessary orders and will authorize the Clerk to conform signatures to be affixed where appropriate.

(h). The Court Clerk will then scan all orders to all participants. The Arresting Agency will print off the orders, deliver them to the arrestee/youth and receive verbal acknowledgments of receipt which will be captured on the record. If there is a temporary order of protection, the Arresting Agency, in addition, will have the arrestee/youth sign to acknowledge receipt and then scan the signed acknowledgement back to the Court at the dedicated court email address specified in (a) above. At this point, the Court Clerk will terminate the Skype connection and stop the FTR recording.

#### **B. AFTER-HOURS ARRAIGNMENTS**

In both CAP and non-CAP counties, arraignments will be conducted according to the same procedure currently in place with the exception that the assigned judge will be at a remote location and will assume the duties of the Court Clerk. This procedure will be altered as need be in those areas where internet connectivity is insufficient to permit a remote Skype conference.

#### **C. OTHER ESSENTIAL CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS**

In all Fourth District counties, the same basic procedure for video arraignments will be followed, the only difference being that the party who commences the proceeding or makes the essential request will be the one who calls the Central Courthouse. If the defendant is incarcerated, the Court Clerk will also call the County Jail to make arrangements for the videoconference. The Court Clerk will also obtain from the initiating party, the names and telephone numbers of all other necessary parties and follow the same process of calling, confirming and re-confirming email addresses for all of them and emailing any and all paperwork, including the Skype videoconference link.

#### **D. REQUESTS FOR TEMPORARY ORDERS OF PROTECTION DURING BUSINESS HOURS**

In all Fourth District counties, litigants who come into court seeking a temporary order of protection will be directed to an enclosed room, adjacent to the magnetometer area and in view of a court officer. In this room will be a specially imaged computer which is configured to permit the litigant to communicate directly with a Court Clerk via a perpetual Skype link thereby simulating what would happen in a face-to-face interaction at the public counter. In

addition, the Court Clerk has the ability to "remote-into" that special computer to provide virtual assistance, either in scanning the petition or, if the litigant did not come with paperwork already completed, in preparing the petition, having it electronically signed and then submitted.

Once the paperwork has been completed by the litigant and electronically submitted to the Court, it will be forwarded to the Duty Judge for review and the process will follow the remote review and videoconference procedures described in Paragraph (A), above. The litigant will attend this videoconference right in the same room.

#### **E. REQUESTS FOR TEMPORARY ORDERS OF PROTECTION AFTER-HOURS**

Persons will be directed, via signs on the door at all City, Town and Village Courts, to the nearest Police Station for further guidance. In the event that law enforcement believes there to be an emergency situation, the same procedure will be followed as is currently in place for notifying the court of an after-hours arraignment.

#### **F. ESSENTIAL FAMILY COURT PROCEEDINGS**

In all Fourth District counties, the same basic procedure for video arraignments will be followed, the only difference being that the party who commences the proceeding or makes the essential request will be the one who calls the Central Courthouse. If the proceeding is submitted in paper only, the initiating party must include a telephone number and email address. In Juvenile Delinquency proceedings, it must also include the name of a representative from the facility where the youth is located who can be contacted to facilitate the Skype videoconference, as well as contact information for all other parties, as the case may be. The Court Clerk will then follow the same process, identified above, for contacting the Duty Judge, calling, confirming and re-confirming email addresses for all other necessary parties and attorneys and scheduling the videoconference. The Court Clerk will also ensure the electronic transmission of all paperwork to all parties via email, including the Skype videoconference link.

#### **G. MENTAL HYGIENE LAW PROCEEDINGS**

In all Fourth District counties, the same basic procedure for video arraignments will be followed, the only difference being that the party who commences the proceeding or makes the essential request will be the one who contacts the Central Courthouse. If the proceeding is submitted in paper only, the initiating party must include a telephone number and email address. Also included must be the name of a representative from the facility where the respondent is detained who can be contacted to facilitate the Skype videoconference, as well as contact information for all other parties. The Court Clerk will then follow the same process, identified above, for calling, confirming and re-confirming email addresses for all other necessary parties and attorneys and for scheduling the videoconference. The Court Clerk will also ensure the electronic transmission of all paperwork to all parties via email, including the Skype videoconference link.

Videoconferencing ability has been developed and tested with all State operated or licensed psychiatric hospitals. In addition, a "bridge" procedure has also been established through the Court System's Division of Technology, to facilitate videoconferencing with all DOCCS facilities.

#### **H. OTHER ESSENTIAL CIVIL PROCEEDINGS, INCLUDING INVOLUNTARY ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE PROCEEDINGS**

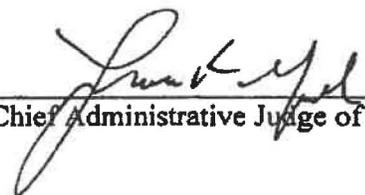
Upon the presentation of an application in an essential civil matter, the Court Clerk will confer electronically and telephonically with the Duty Judge. The Duty Judge shall determine the feasibility of either a videoconference or a telephonic appearance by the parties and their attorneys. Special effort will be made to determine if the matter can be resolved on the papers alone.

If it cannot be so resolved, the Court Clerk will then follow the same process, identified above, for calling, confirming and re-confirming email addresses for all other necessary parties and attorneys and for scheduling the videoconference. The Court Clerk will also ensure the electronic transmission of all paperwork to all parties via email, including the Skype videoconference link.

Involuntary Isolation and Quarantine proceedings, will proceed in the same manner as video arraignments, with the County Attorney calling the Court. Skype connections to laptop computers issued to Public Health nurses have been established and tested in every county. These permit respondents to appear remotely via a Skype link sent to the public health nurse's email address, either from a residential or a hospital location. In those areas where there is no broadband service, arrangements have been made for telephonic appearance by the respondent while the other necessary parties appear via the Skype link.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF THE  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE OF THE COURTS**

Pursuant to the authority vested in me, in light of the emergency circumstances caused by the continuing COVID-19 outbreak in New York State and the nation, and consistent with the Governor of New York's recent executive order suspending statutes of limitation in legal matters, I direct that, effective immediately and until further order, no papers shall be accepted for filing by a county clerk or a court in any matter of a type not included on the list of essential matters attached as Exh. A. This directive applies to both paper and electronic filings.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts

Dated: March 22, 2020

AO/78/20

**Exhibit A**

Essential Proceedings  
Administrative Order AO/78/20  
March 22, 2020

- A. Criminal matters
  - 1. arraignments
  - 2. bail applications, reviews and writs
  - 3. temporary orders of protection
  - 4. resentencing of retained and incarcerated defendants
  - 5. essential sex offender registration act (SORA) matters
  
- B. Family Court
  - 1. child protection intake cases involving removal applications
  - 2. newly filed juvenile delinquency intake cases involving remand placement applications, or modification thereof
  - 3. emergency family offense petitions/temporary orders of protection
  - 4. orders to show cause
  - 5. stipulations on submission
  
- C. Supreme Court
  - 1. Mental Hygiene Law (MHL) applications and hearings addressing patient retention or release
  - 2. MHL hearings addressing the involuntary administration of medication and other medical care
  - 3. newly filed MHL applications for an assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) plan
  - 4. emergency applications in guardianship matters
  - 5. temporary orders of protection (including but not limited to matters involving domestic violence)
  - 6. emergency applications related to the coronavirus
  - 7. emergency Election Law applications
  - 8. extreme risk protection orders (ERPO)
  
- D. Civil/Housing matters
  - 1. applications addressing landlord lockouts (including reductions in essential services)
  - 2. applications addressing serious code violations
  - 3. applications addressing serious repair orders
  - 4. applications for post-eviction relief
  
- E. All Courts
  - 1. any other matter that the court deems essential

This list of essential proceedings is subject to ongoing review and amendment as necessary.

**ATTACHMENT B**

**CLINTON COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
CLINTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE CLINTON COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING 137 MARGARET STREET PLATTSBURGH, NY 123901	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:ClintonSupremeCo@nycourts.gov">ClintonSupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	518-536-3800
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:ClintonFamily@nycourts.gov">ClintonFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-536-3800
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:ClintonSurrogate@nycourts.gov">ClintonSurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-536-3800
	Plattsburgh City Court	<a href="mailto:PlattsburghCity@nycourts.gov">PlattsburghCity@nycourts.gov</a>	518-536-3870

**ESSEX COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
ESSEX COUNTY COURTHOUSE 7559 COURT STREET ELIZABETHTOWN, NY 12932	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:EssexSupremeCo@nycourts.gov">EssexSupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	518-873-3370
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:EssexFamily@nycourts.gov">EssexFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-873-3320
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:EssexSurrogate@nycourts.gov">EssexSurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-873-3384

**FRANKLIN COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
FRANKLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE 355 WEST MAIN STREET MALONE, NY 12953	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:FranklinSupremeCo@nycourts.gov">FranklinSupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	518-353-7333
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:FranklinFamily@nycourts.gov">FranklinFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-353-7333
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:FranklinSurrogate@nycourts.gov">FranklinSurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-353-7333

**FULTON COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
FULTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE FAMILY COURT BUILDING 11 NORTH WILLIAM STREET JOHNSTOWN, NY 12095	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:FultonSupremeCo@nycourts.gov">FultonSupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	518-706-3290
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:FultonFamily@nycourts.gov">FultonFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-706-3260
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:FultonSurrogate@nycourts.gov">FultonSurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-706-3280
	Gloversville City Court	<a href="mailto:GloversvilleCity@nycourts.gov">GloversvilleCity@nycourts.gov</a>	518-706-3320
	Johnstown City Court	<a href="mailto:JohnstownCity@nycourts.gov">JohnstownCity@nycourts.gov</a>	518-706-3310

**HAMILTON COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
HAMILTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE 102 COUNTY VIEW DRIVE LAKE PLEASANT, NY 12108	County Court	<a href="mailto:HamiltonCounty@nycourts.gov">HamiltonCounty@nycourts.gov</a>	518-648-5411
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:HamiltonFamily@nycourts.gov">HamiltonFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-648-5411
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:HamiltonSurrogate@nycourts.gov">HamiltonSurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-648-5411

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE 58 BROADWAY FONDA, NY 12068	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:MontgomerySupremeCo@nycourts.gov">MontgomerySupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	518-853-4516
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:MontgomeryFamily@nycourts.gov">MontgomeryFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-853-8133
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:MontgomerySurrogate@nycourts.gov">MontgomerySurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-853-8108
	Amsterdam City Court	<a href="mailto:AmsterdamCity@nycourts.gov">AmsterdamCity@nycourts.gov</a>	518-842-9510

**ST..LAWRENCE COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY COURTHOUSE 48 COURT STREET CANTON, NY 13617	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:StLawrenceSupremeCo@nycourts.gov">StLawrenceSupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	315-379-2219
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:StLawrenceFamily@nycourts.gov">StLawrenceFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	315-379-2410
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:StLawrenceSurrogate@nycourts.gov">StLawrenceSurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	315-379-2217
	Ogdensburg City Court	<a href="mailto:OgdensburgCity@nycourts.gov">OgdensburgCity@nycourts.gov</a>	315-379-3240

**SARATOGA COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
SARATOGA COUNTY COURTHOUSE FAMILY COURT BUILDING #2 30 McMASTER STREET BALLSTON SPA, NY 12020	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:SaratogaSupremeCo@nycourts.gov">SaratogaSupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	518-451-8840
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:SaratogaFamily@nycourts.gov">SaratogaFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-451-8888
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:SaratogaSurrogate@nycourts.gov">SaratogaSurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-451-8830
	Saratoga Springs City Court	<a href="mailto:SaratogaCity@nycourts.gov">SaratogaCity@nycourts.gov</a>	518-451-8780
	Mechanicville City Court	<a href="mailto:MechanicvilleCity@nycourts.gov">MechanicvilleCity@nycourts.gov</a>	518-453-5959

**SCHENECTADY COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
SCHENECTADY COUNTY FAMILY COURT 620 STATE STREET SCHENECTADY, NY 12305	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:SchenectadySupremeCo@nycourts.gov">SchenectadySupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	518-285-8401
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:SchenectadyFamily@nycourts.gov">SchenectadyFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-285-8435
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:SchenectadySurrogate@nycourts.gov">SchenectadySurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-285-8455
	Schenectady City Court	<a href="mailto:SchenectadyCity@nycourts.gov">SchenectadyCity@nycourts.gov</a>	518-453-6989

**WARREN COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
WARREN COUNTY COURTHOUSE FAMILY COURT WING 1340 STATE ROUTE 9 LAKE GEORGE, NY 12845	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:WarrenSupremeCo@nycourts.gov">WarrenSupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	518-480-6335
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:WarrenFamily@nycourts.gov">WarrenFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-480-6305
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:WarrenSurrogate@nycourts.gov">WarrenSurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-480-6360
	Glens Falls City Court	<a href="mailto:GlensFallsCity@nycourts.gov">GlensFallsCity@nycourts.gov</a>	518-480-6365

**WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COURTHOUSE**

LOCATION	COURT	EMAIL CONTACT	PHONE #
WASHINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE 383 BROADWAY FORT EDWARD, NY 12828	Supreme & County Court	<a href="mailto:WashingtonSupremeCo@nycourts.gov">WashingtonSupremeCo@nycourts.gov</a>	518-746-2521
	Family Court	<a href="mailto:WashingtonFamily@nycourts.gov">WashingtonFamily@nycourts.gov</a>	518-746-2501
	Surrogate Court	<a href="mailto:WashingtonSurrogate@nycourts.gov">WashingtonSurrogate@nycourts.gov</a>	518-746-2545



## Joining Skype For Business Meeting

New York State Unified Court System has been using Skype for Business (SfB) for both internal videoconferencing and remote video appearances with external parties, such as attorneys, litigants, and witnesses. This guide is for those who wish to join a court-organized videoconferencing call.

**Q1. What are the minimum requirements for participating a SfB videoconferencing call?**

**A1. You must have a decent computer or smartphone with up-to-date operating system, and a high-speed Internet connections.**

**Q2. I don't have a Microsoft Office365 Account, can I join a SfB videoconferencing call?**

**A2. Yes, you can still fully participate in a SfB video call from a web browser without paying for a license.**

**Q3. Why is it important to have a decent computer with an up-to-date operating system?**

**A3. Videoconferencing requires more computer horsepower than regular applications, such as a word processor. Obsolete Operating Systems, such as Windows 7, not only have security holes, but also may exhibit unpredictable behavior when joining a Skype call.**

**Q4. Can I join a SfB videoconference call without a webcam?**

**A4. Most laptops or tablets, as well as smartphones, have built in webcams. If you don't have a webcam, you can still join the SfB meeting. People can hear you, however, they cannot see you, which is not desirable in most court proceedings.**

**Q5. What would you recommend for the audio?**

**A5. Obviously, you don't have a meaningful videoconferencing calls without the audio. To achieve the best effects, we recommend the use of a USB headset. You may use an external speakerphone or built-in speaker and microphone within your device, however it might pick up background noises. In those cases, you should sit close to the microphone.**

**Q6. How can I know my Internet connection is good enough for a Skype video call?**

**A6. Most people have broadband (highspeed) connections from their service providers, such as Spectrum, Cablevision Lightpath (Xfinity), or Verizon Fios. Under normal circumstance, those broadband connections are more than sufficient to support Skype video calls. Keep in mind that when you are joining a Skype video call during the emergency, you are competing the same bandwidth with other people staying home working, learning and being entertained. Sometimes you may see your video has a lag and a pixelization. This is a sign of Internet traffic congestion. The problem usually will clear up by**

itself after a few seconds, so please be patient. In addition, please connect your computer to a network port in your router if possible. A wired connection has better performance than a Wi-Fi connection.

Q7. How can I prepare myself for the Skype video calls?

A7. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of performing a test well ahead of time to ensure equipment compatibility and to familiarize with the interface. You may send your cell phone number, email address, and preferred date and time for the test to [skypetest@nycourts.gov](mailto:skypetest@nycourts.gov). We will schedule a test call, send you the invitation and conduct the test with you.

Q8. Is Skype for Business secure?

A8. All communications on Skype for Business are encrypted. Microsoft designed the product with security in mind. To learn more about security features: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/skypeforbusiness/optimizing-your-network/security-guide-for-skype-for-business-online>

Q9. Can you share documents with all the participants?

A9. While you can use Skype for Business for document sharing, we recommend you contact the clerk handling your case about the best approach for sharing/sending documents. If you have to, you can share documents within Sfb in two ways: either open the document and share the desktop for the parties to view, or share the document as an attachment for the parties to download, view and print. Be aware that the document sharing feature might not work on all platforms.

Q10. Where I can find tutorial on using Skype for Business?

A10. Please click on the link below:

[https://support.office.com/en-us/article/join-a-skype-for-business-meeting-3862be6d-758a-4064-a016-67c0feb3cd5#OS\\_Type=Windows](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/join-a-skype-for-business-meeting-3862be6d-758a-4064-a016-67c0feb3cd5#OS_Type=Windows)

Q11. What are the most common problems a user will encounter, and where I can get technical support during the video call?

A11. Common issues include:

- People cannot hear you: Make sure you are not muted. B) Select the correct audio device.
- I cannot hear other people: Make sure other people are not muted. B) Raise your speaker volume.
- My video is off: Make sure the camera is turned on and the correct camera is selected when you have a multiple cameras.
- I hear echo: Lower the volume of your speakers will usually reduce echo.
- Hanging up and reconnecting a call will many times resolve the issue.
- My Skype call becomes non-responsive: This is usually caused by some other software or background process running on your computer. Make sure your all your software is updated and security patched well ahead of the video call. It is also a good idea to reboot your computer at least one hour before the meeting to get a fresh start.

- I am in the middle of the video call, something goes wrong. What should I do: It is impossible to provide technical support in the middle of a call. If problems cannot be resolved using the tips above, the best bet is to hang up Skype and reconnect.

Q12. Can I use my Skype to join a Sfb video call?

A12. Many of you may be familiar with Skype, a videoconferencing and IM product targeted at the consumer market. Skype for Business (SfB) is an enterprise platform for secure communications and collaboration. For all intent and purpose, you cannot use Skype in court-organized SfB video calls.

Q13. Why can't I use other products, such as FaceTime, for videoconferencing with the courts?

There are many videoconferencing products in the market. For example, FaceTime is excellent for point-to-point video calls if both ends use Apple products. When using videoconferencing in a court proceeding, we have to use SfB, a proven product current in use by the court system that is secure, scalable to support multi-party call, versatile to work with different computers and smartphones.

Q13. Whom should I contact to schedule a Skype video call with the judge and other parties?

A13. You should contact the clerk of the appropriate court for procedure on how to schedule and participate a videoconferencing call for courtroom proceedings or attorney/client consultation. More information could be found at [www.nycourts.gov](http://www.nycourts.gov)

Q14. Can I join a Skype video call using a iPhone or Mac?

A14. Yes, please go to Apple App Store to download the Skype for Business app (not the regular Skype app).

Q15. If I join the meeting from home, what should I do to achieve the best audio and visual experience?

A15. Select a quiet room, preferably no windows behind you. If you do have windows behind you has to be behind you, close the blinds.

Q16. How come I am unable to download the Skype web plug-in?

A16. This is most likely a security setting on your computer that is set to prevent you from downloading the plug-in. Please see technical support in your organization and let them know you need this mission critical application to work.