

BEST PRACTICE FOR REMOTE HEARINGS/MEETINGS

General Guidelines:

- Mobile phone technology creates distortions, even when efforts are made to ensure strong signals. Consider repeating the most important information - eg, guilty v not guilty; motion carried v motion not carried - to ensure that audio interference does not create ambiguity.
- For those participating in person, please be aware that masks create muffled distortions, even when the person is speaking into a microphone.
- If a participant is difficult to hear or understand by a human being, it is a certainty that the recording technology will have equal, if not more, difficulty. Therefore, please ask them to speak louder and clearer to ensure a clear recording and do pause proceedings to ensure clarity of an issue before continuing. If the remote meeting programme permits, it is recommended that the host should require participants to be muted unless they are speaking. This will help to minimise the propensity for simultaneous speech, which cannot be understood on the recording, and background noise that can include:
 - the rustling of papers
 - typing
 - aside comments/consultation with co-participants
 - fans/air conditioning
 - extraneous noises (eg, noises from an open window, dogs barking, children playing, traffic and weather)
 - noises of a personal nature, eg, sneezing/coughing

Information for remote participants for sharing when scheduling a hearing/meeting:

- Remote participants should appear from a location free of extraneous background noise and with good telephone reception.
- Landline phones allow for a cleaner recording than mobile phones and, therefore, should be used where possible. If using a mobile phone, the participant should ensure they have full network coverage and should remain in one place and not move around so that coverage does not fluctuate.
- Participants should remain indoors for the duration of the matter to ensure there is no extraneous background noise, eg, traffic, that can affect the quality of the recording.
- Headsets with microphones attached, close to the participant's mouth, provide the most consistent sound, predominantly because the distance between the speaker's mouth and microphone remains consistent.
- If more than one person is in attendance from the same location, they should, to avoid feedback, never have more than one microphone in use at any one time.

Before the matter begins, and after any break, the host should review the following points with all participants:

- Speakers should introduce/reintroduce themselves. This is especially important for transcription purposes, as without specialised reporting software that provides speaker identification through

log notes, the transcriber cannot determine who is speaking.

- Participants should mute themselves when not speaking.
- Participants should be reminded that if two or more people speak simultaneously, it is likely that no-one will be audible and, therefore, participants should be recognised before speaking (this also helps with speaker identification). In the case of objections, please pause after objecting so the basis for the objection can be clearly captured by the recording.
- Participants should speak clearly and slowly and, after unmuting, wait a full second before speaking to ensure the first word is not cut off by technological delay.

After the hearing/meeting:

- Some audio systems record on separate channels. This may not always be apparent, so it is worth checking with the recording provider. If the recording system has this ability, you should request that the audio be sent to the transcript provider in both blended and separate channel format.