



How to Attend Your Hearing

When you request a hearing with an administrative law judge (ALJ), we will schedule you to attend the hearing in one of four ways: (1) in person at one of our offices; (2) by audio using a telephone in a private location you choose; (3) by agency video using our video equipment at one of our offices; or (4) by online video using a personal electronic device, such as a smartphone, tablet, or computer with an internet connection, in a private location you choose. You can object to attending your hearing by audio or agency video. We will not schedule you to attend your hearing by online video unless you agree to attend in that way.

How do you attend a hearing in person?

To attend a hearing in person, you must travel to one of our offices, such as a hearing office or a permanent remote site. You and the ALJ will be in the same hearing room. You cannot object to attending your hearing in person.

How do you attend a hearing by audio?

To attend a hearing by audio, you must use a telephone, including a cellular phone, in a private location of your choice. You will be able to communicate with the ALJ, who will be in a different location. Because you will use a telephone only, you will not be able to see the ALJ. If we schedule you to attend your hearing by audio, we will call you at the telephone number you provide at the specified date and time. Unless you object, we may schedule you to attend your hearing by audio.

In limited circumstances, we may schedule you to attend by audio even if you tell us that you do not want to attend that way. For example, we will schedule you to attend by audio when we cannot schedule you to attend by agency video or online video and extraordinary circumstances

prevent you from attending in person. Examples of extraordinary circumstances include natural disasters.

How do you attend a hearing by agency video?

To attend a hearing by agency video, you must travel to one of our offices. We will provide all the video equipment for the hearing. You will be able to communicate with the ALJ, who will be in a different location, just as if you were in the same room. The hearing will occur using our secure network, and we will have someone available to make sure the video equipment is connected and working properly.

If we schedule you to attend your hearing by agency video, pay close attention to the hearing location on your notice of hearing. The location of your hearing might be different from the location of the hearing office that contacted you previously. Unless you object, we may schedule you to attend your hearing by agency video.

How do you attend a hearing by online video?

To attend a hearing by online video, you must attend the hearing at a private location of your choice using a personal electronic device, such as a smartphone, tablet, or computer with an internet connection. The hearing will occur over the internet using Microsoft Teams. You will be able to see, hear, and speak to the ALJ, who will be in a different location. We will not supply a smartphone, tablet, or computer or an internet connection for the hearing. Examples of a private location include your home or your representative's office if you are represented.

To attend a hearing by online video, you must have access to email. The device you use for the hearing must have a camera, microphone, and a speaker. Before the date of your hearing,

we will email you a link to a user guide that explains how to access and use Microsoft Teams on your device.

We will not schedule you to attend your hearing by online video unless you agree to attend in that way.

Privacy Notice: Please note that Microsoft Teams is a non-government, third party application. This application is not under Social Security's control and may not follow Social Security's privacy, security, or accessibility policies located on Social Security's official website at <https://www.ssa.gov/agency/privacy.html>. Once you access this application, you are subject to the policies of Microsoft, and you may be asked to agree to Microsoft's terms of use and privacy policies, which Social Security does not control. As such, by using this application, you may be providing non-government third parties access to your personally identifiable information (PII).

How can I prepare for an online video hearing?

When you receive the invitation email, click the hearing link and test your connection.

- **Personal computer:** If you have a web browser that supports Microsoft Teams, you will see Microsoft Teams open. If your web browser does not support Microsoft Teams, you will be prompted to download the free application.
- **Mobile device (iOS/Android):** On a mobile device (tablet or smartphone), you will be prompted to download the free Microsoft Teams application.

Before the hearing:

- Ensure your personal computer or mobile device has an internet connection from a private location (for example, at your home).
- Connect to a nearby power source to charge your computer or mobile device, as needed.

Visit the www.ssa.gov/appeals/hearing_options.html webpage for additional information about technical requirements to attend a hearing by online video using Microsoft Teams. If you have technical questions, please contact the hearing office at the telephone number provided on your notice of hearing.

Does the agency record hearings?

We only record the audio portion of our hearings, even for agency video and online video hearings. We do not record the video portion of any of our hearings.

Why might I want to attend a hearing by audio, agency video, or online video?

There are a number of reasons you might want to attend a hearing by audio, agency video, or online video. For example, we can often schedule a hearing sooner when you attend by audio, agency video, or online video. Also, you do not have to travel to one of our offices when you attend your hearing by audio or online video. You may attend by audio or online video from the comfort and convenience of any private location you prefer, such as your home. The location you prefer must be within the 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the United States Virgin Islands. Additionally, we have many locations available for agency video hearings, and those locations may be closer to you than the hearing office where you would attend your hearing in person.

What should I do if I do not want to attend a hearing by audio or agency video?

Before scheduling your hearing, we will send you a notice telling you that we may schedule you to attend your hearing by audio or agency video unless you object to attending in one or both of those ways within 30 days. If you object to attending by audio, agency video, or both, you must tell us that in writing within 30 days after the date you receive the notice. If you tell us that you object after the 30-day deadline, please also tell us why you missed the deadline and the ALJ will decide whether you had good cause for missing the deadline.

What should I do if I agree to attend my hearing by online video?

We will not schedule you to attend your hearing by online video unless you agree to attend in that way. We will use Microsoft Teams if you attend your hearing by online video. Before scheduling your hearing, we will send you a notice telling you that we may schedule you to attend by online video if you agree to attend in that way. If you agree to attend by online video, you must tell us that in writing within 30 days after the date you receive the notice. If you tell us that you agree after the 30-day deadline, please also tell us why you missed the deadline, and the ALJ will decide whether you had good cause for missing the deadline. You may withdraw your agreement to attend by online video any time before the start of your hearing. If you tell us that you no longer want to attend by online video, we will reschedule your hearing so that you can attend in a different way, which may also result in a different date and time for your hearing.

Note: *If you disagree with Microsoft's terms of use and privacy policies, you should not agree to attend your hearing by online video.*

What happens if I do not attend my scheduled hearing?

If neither you nor your representative, if you have one, attend the scheduled hearing, the ALJ may dismiss your request for hearing, unless the ALJ finds that you had good cause for not attending.

If you cannot attend your hearing as scheduled, you must tell us that in writing as soon as you can. Unless the ALJ agrees to reschedule your hearing, you should attend at the original date and time set for the hearing. By letting us know you cannot attend, you give another person the opportunity to use that hearing time.

Protecting Your Privacy

We will collect and maintain personally identifiable information you share with us during the hearing to make a decision on your claim. If you attend your hearing by audio, agency video or online video, an ALJ will conduct the hearing from a private location. The ALJ and other agency employees will safeguard your personal information if you attend by audio, agency video, or online video by using the agency's secure network and hardware. If you attend your hearing by audio or online video, you must attend it from a private location in one of the geographic areas noted above. We also recommend that you use a private internet connection when attending a hearing by online video.



Securing today
and tomorrow

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