

Bar Leaders,

Last week, I sent a reminder to the City, County, Family and Supreme Court Judges of the 7th Judicial District to be mindful of some unique issues that are presented in virtual proceedings regarding the need to create accurate transcriptions of court proceedings and I suggested some “best practices”. As many of the practices involve the actions of lawyers and their clients, I believe it is helpful to share with you those best practices.

- All lawyers and litigants should identify themselves at the beginning of each appearance, when the case is called.
 - When a “running” or “open” Skype link is used, do not announce your presence on the call when you are connected. Wait for your case to be called.
 - All microphones should be muted when not in use.
 - Courtroom rules apply - speak one at a time and do not interrupt other speakers, including the judge.
 - Under no circumstances should anyone other than the Judge or Court Clerk record the proceeding.
 - Judges and attorneys should make every effort to appear via video, with cameras engaged. Telephonic appearances should be limited to litigants who are unable to appear via video.
 - If an individual is unable to appear via video, that individual should use the call-in number included with the Skype invitation. The use of speakerphone to facilitate an appearance creates a distorted sound and should not be used.
- Parties not appearing via video should identify themselves each time they speak.
 - Maintain the decorum of an in-person courtroom. Lawyers and litigants should appear from an office or quiet space. Background noise is detrimental to the conditions necessary to endure an accurate transcript and diminishes the decorum of the proceeding. Parties should be reminded that all the rules of a courtroom apply.

As an update, on July 6, 2020 we began temperature screening all visitors to the courthouses. On July 15, 2020 all Unified Court System employees and judges will undergo a temperature screening and self-assessment screening each day upon entry to the courthouse.

Finally, I have attached the New York State Quarantine Watchlist as of today’s date. Please note, “Persons who have traveled in any of these states on or after the date the state was added to the quarantine list must self-quarantine for fourteen days, and shall not be permitted to enter a courthouse or other court facility during that period.”

Hon. Craig J. Doran
Administrative Judge
Seventh Judicial District