

# Virtual Appearance Guide

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## 1. Purpose

This guide has been compiled to assist practitioners and self-represented litigants in preparing for and participating in court proceedings using TEAMS / AVL or telephone technology. As per the notice issued by the Chief Judge on 17 January 2022 –Arrangements for the continuation of Local Court Proceedings: Notice to Legal Practitioners, Police and Corrections regarding Local Court proceedings. Leave is granted as per this notice for appearances via TEAMS or audio visual link (AVL) / telephone for your matters.

For public and staff safety it is imperative that physical appearances at courthouses be kept to an absolute minimum.

## 2. Procedure

The Local Court is committed to providing options of attending Court that will meet the needs of all stakeholders. If you have any queries about the preferred use or facilities available in any location please contact the Registrars of the relevant registries, contact details can be found at the bottom of this form.

### 2.1. Methods available

#### 2.1.1. Microsoft TEAMS

The Local Courts preferred method of virtual appearances will be Microsoft TEAMS. The Court does not facilitate webex or zoom. TEAMS can work on desktops / tablets and mobile phones. A link will be provided for each court.

#### 2.1.2. AVL (Audio Visual Link)

AVL link requests are usually from government offices, prisons and detention centres. This is automatically used in most cases to link up to Northern Territory Correctional Centres and Northern Territory Detention Centres and to arrange links between Local and Supreme Courts. AVL is only currently available for Northern Territory Local and Supreme Court matters. AVL links require prior application and booking.

#### 2.1.3. Telephone

If appearance via TEAMS or AVL is not appropriate or available, the Court will allow a telephone appearance.

### 2.2. Notification to the Court

#### 2.2.1. Virtual appearance notification

If you are going to be attending via TEAMS / telephone or a pre-arranged AVL you will need to notify the Court by completion of the attached form. The Form does not have to be printed and signed but can be pasted into an email and sent to the relevant registry. Whilst the Chief Judge has granted leave for virtual appearances the Court **MUST BE GIVEN NOTICE**. This notice must reach the Court before the court commences, preferably 48 hours before, or in urgent circumstances as soon as practically possible.

## 2.2.2. Virtual appearance notification details

Attached to this guide is a virtual appearance notification form. This form can be either scanned or emailed to the Court OR the table copied and pasted into an email directly. The details contained in this form are critical to the requirements of the court and your appearance will not proceed if this is NOT complied with.

This must include a direct telephone number to allow the court to make immediate contact if there are any technical difficulties, please do not provide switchboards or reception.

<b>NOTIFICATION OF VIRTUAL APPEARANCE</b>	
<b>MATTER NAME AND FILE NUMBER</b>	
<b>DATE OF COURT</b> and time if known	
<b>PARTY</b>	
<b>PERSON APPEARING</b>	
<b>APPEARING BY TEAMS / PHONE</b>	
<b>DIRECT PHONE NUMBER</b>	
<b>SPECIFIC EMAIL ADDRESS FOR INVITATION TO BE SENT TO</b>	
<b>TYPE OF LISTING</b>	
<b>UNAVAILABLE TIMES</b>	

If in extenuating circumstances you cannot comply with this, you must ring the relevant registry urgently to provide the information and seek advice as to the next steps.

## 2.3. Using TEAMS

### 2.3.1. TEAMS invitation

Every day during the pandemic and until further advised a TEAMS meeting will be established for each of the sittings Courts. Upon receipt of virtual attendance notification you will be included in an email for the link to that meeting room.

### 2.3.2. Testing TEAMS

If you have concerns about using TEAMS for your appearances and would like to conduct a test run please contact the relevant registry. You can also run tests with other users to ensure you have:

- clear picture and audio
- that you know how to mute and unmute yourself
- that you know how to turn your video on and off

Microsoft TEAMS have a variety of materials that can assist with troubleshooting and navigating TEAMS, these can be accessed by the links at the end of this guide.

### 2.3.3. Joining TEAMS

To join the link, you can do a number of things:

#### 2.3.3.1. Join meeting now

You can join by pressing on the “join meeting now” in the email you have received

You can join TEAMS on your phone by going into the app, into the calendar and clicking on join now

You can join TEAMS by logging in via an internet browser and signing in with your log in details.

You can join TEAMS by using conference rooms that are enabled with TEAMS by dialling [teams@teams.nt.gov.au](mailto:teams@teams.nt.gov.au) and typing in the relevant TEAMS identification and pin.

A recent test involving a legal service found that a much clearer picture was produced when pasting the meeting invitation into the internet browser, rather than directly connecting through their email system.

### 2.3.4. When to Join

You are to enter and join the teams meeting at the time allocated on the mud map distributed daily or at the time you would ordinarily appear at Court or have been notified by the Court to appear. You must stay connected to the link until your matter is heard or until you are advised of the time to rejoin the meeting. The virtual court will operate in the same way it would if you were waiting at the bar table or in the Court awaiting mention of the matter.

When you join the meeting please remain on mute until instructed to unmute yourself or your matter is called upon. If you are having any connection or bandwidth issues please do not show your video until your matter is ready to be mentioned. If there are a number of matters being heard and a number of practitioner on the teams event please advise the court staff that you are ready to mention your matter.

You can advise the court staff you are ready to mention matter XXX by either using the chat facility within the meeting (remember all in attendance can read this) or by emailing the court orderly.

### 2.3.5. TEAMS etiquette

#### 2.3.5.1. Sound and video quality issues

Please disable your microphone and camera when you first enter the call. This avoids any reverb issues with speakers feeding back into the microphone and causing lag reverb. Practitioners should give consideration to this issue in preparation for any test run or hearing.

The camera on your device, computer or laptop should be at eye level whilst you are seated. Laptops and screens should be placed on something to ensure the camera is at or near eye level. Consider whether what is behind you is appropriate for court room display. Ensure your room has adequate lighting and the background is appropriate for Court.

When you are asked to speak by the Judge please enable both your video and microphone. When not speaking your microphone should remain on mute, your video may remain on, if the internet quality allows for this.

At various times, participants' (and the Court's) internet capacity might impact the quality of sound and video, at these times video and sound should be turned off unless speaking.

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## 2.3.6. Court room procedures

### 2.3.6.1. Formalities

The Court, when commencing a matter or list after connections are established will announce that the Court is now in session and when the Court session is concluded. You are not required to rise for this.

### 2.3.6.2. Witnesses

Where possible, counsel or instructing solicitors should talk with the witnesses beforehand and ensure they are comfortable and familiar with the relevant technology.

Where objections to questions require some deliberation and would ideally occur out of earshot of the witness, there are two options: first, asking the witness to mute their computer or walk out of the room, both of which require a level of trust; and second the Court is able to virtually eject the witness from the meeting space and ask counsel or an instructor to call the witness when they are able to re-join the meeting.

### 2.3.6.3. Providing documentation to the Court

Any electronic filing of documents must be done in accordance with Practice Note 38: [Electronic filing](#).

All material that may be referred to during a court appearance should be provided to the Court in advance via email to the appropriate registry.

If this cannot occur and there is a requirement to provide something to the Court after Court has commenced this can be done in the following 2 ways:

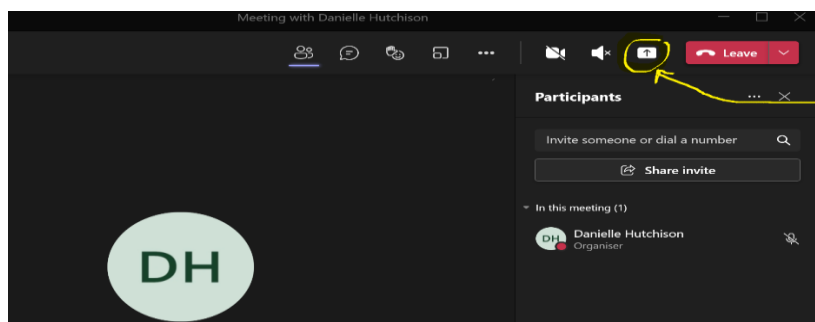
#### Email

Upon receiving your invitation to the TEAMS meeting each day, the details for the Court officer responsible for your Court will be included. These email addresses are to be used for that particular date and that Court only. Each court date will have a different court officer and you should pay attention to the contact Court officer listed on the invitation details. At this stage the court officer will provide the material to the Judge electronically only, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The court officer will not be able to print, move around the building or make copies for parties unless in exceptional circumstances.

If the rostered Court officer is not available, you will be informed of the new officer's contact details on the morning of court.

#### Sharescreen

Microsoft TEAMS has the capacity to share screen, therefore if you are sitting at a desk and conducting your matter you can open the document on your computer and press the share screen button.



#### 2.3.6.4. Technical Issues

Issues will arise that could not have been foreseen. In those instances, the Judge will adjourn so that the issue can be attended to. That might take some trouble-shooting, such as asking various participants to mute or unmute their microphones, etc. Please exercise patience with technical issues so we may work with you to resolve these.

Please note: If the issues cannot be overcome then the Court will contact the parties on the phone numbers provided on their virtual appearance notification.

#### 2.3.6.5. Transcript considerations

All court recordings are recorded in the case of a transcript being required. Please speak slowly and clearly to ensure the quality of transcripts in this process.

### 2.4. Using AVL.

In the case of a pre booked AVL the Court staff will arrange the AVL connection in accordance with usual procedure.

### 2.5. Using Telephone

If you are going to be appearing via telephone please note the following applies

All telephone numbers must be direct lines and not switchboards, answering services or receptions.

All parties must be available throughout the day for when their matter is called on, or specify when they will not be available.

If you are not speaking, please mute your phone so that your background noise does not interrupt the proceeding.

If you do not answer, or the line is busy, the number will be called twice more. If you do not answer in this time frame a non-appearance will be noted and the matter will proceed in your absence. Messages will not be left if the phone goes to message bank.

## 3. Additional Support

### 3.1.1. Microsoft TEAMS

Please note that if you are using a conference room or have linked into TEAMS by clicking “join here” and if your visual and audio is pixelated and blurry, it may be because your organisation doesn’t default to the microsoft environment. To rectify this you should log into TEAMS by adding the address bar into your browser.

[Join a Teams meeting \(microsoft.com\)](#)

[Microsoft Teams help & learning - Microsoft Support](#)

### 3.1.2. Contact details

#### Virtual appearance notification details:

##### Darwin Local Court

All virtual appearances slips are to be emailed to [DLC.Operations@nt.gov.au](mailto:DLC.Operations@nt.gov.au) other filing of documents or filing of electronic documents are to be filed with the relevant registry.

##### Darwin Children's Court

All virtual appearances slips are to be emailed to [Darwin.ChildrensCourt@nt.gov.au](mailto:Darwin.ChildrensCourt@nt.gov.au) other filing of documents or filing of electronic documents are to be filed with the relevant registry.

##### Alice Springs Local Court

All virtual appearances slips are to be emailed to [ASLC.Listings@nt.gov.au](mailto:ASLC.Listings@nt.gov.au) cc'ing the relevant Registry. other filing of documents or filing of electronic documents are to be filed with the relevant Registry.

##### Tennant Creek Local Court

All virtual appearances slips are to be emailed to [TCLC.Registry@nt.gov.au](mailto:TCLC.Registry@nt.gov.au)

##### Katherine Local Court

All virtual appearances slips are to be emailed to [Katherine.LocalCourt@nt.gov.au](mailto:Katherine.LocalCourt@nt.gov.au)

##### Nhulunbuy Local Court

All virtual appearances slips are to be emailed to [NTLC.eastarnhem@nt.gov.au](mailto:NTLC.eastarnhem@nt.gov.au)

#### **Electronic filing of documents – All other electronic filing to be sent to the below: Registry email details**

Alice Springs Local Court (Civil Registry) [ASLC.CivilRegistry@nt.gov.au](mailto:ASLC.CivilRegistry@nt.gov.au)

Alice Springs Local Court (Criminal Registry) [ASLC.CriminalRegistry@nt.gov.au](mailto:ASLC.CriminalRegistry@nt.gov.au)

Alice Springs Local Court (Domestic and Personal Violence matters) [ASLC.DV@nt.gov.au](mailto:ASLC.DV@nt.gov.au)

Alice Springs Children's Court [AS.ChildrensCourt@nt.gov.au](mailto:AS.ChildrensCourt@nt.gov.au)

Darwin Local Court (Civil Registry) – [DLC.CivilRegistry@nt.gov.au](mailto:DLC.CivilRegistry@nt.gov.au)

Darwin Local Court (Criminal Registry) [DLC.CriminalRegistry@nt.gov.au](mailto:DLC.CriminalRegistry@nt.gov.au)

Darwin Local Court (Domestic and Personal Violence matters) [DLC.DV@nt.gov.au](mailto:DLC.DV@nt.gov.au)

Darwin Childrens Court [Darwin.ChildrensCourt@nt.gov.au](mailto:Darwin.ChildrensCourt@nt.gov.au)

Katherine Local Court: [Katherine.LocalCourt@nt.gov.au](mailto:Katherine.LocalCourt@nt.gov.au)

Nhulunbuy Local Court: [NTLC.eastarnhem@nt.gov.au](mailto:NTLC.eastarnhem@nt.gov.au)

Tennant Creek [TCLC.Registry@nt.gov.au](mailto:TCLC.Registry@nt.gov.au)

### 3.1.3. Virtual appearance notification Form

See next page

# NOTIFICATION OF VIRTUAL APPEARANCE

As per the Chief Judge's direction dated 17/01/2022: Leave is granted for virtual appearances in the Local Court during the Covid pandemic, unless otherwise ordered.

NOTIFICATION OF VIRTUAL APPEARANCE	
MATTER NAME AND FILE NUMBER	
DATE OF COURT and time if known	
PARTY	
PERSON APPEARING	
APPEARING BY TEAMS / PHONE	
DIRECT PHONE NUMBER	
SPECIFIC EMAIL ADDRESS FOR link.	
TYPE OF LISTING	
UNAVAILABLE TIMES	

## CHECKLIST

- Have you completed all above information
- All parties must be available throughout the day for when their matter is called on, or specify when they will not be available. The Court may not be able to accommodate unavailable times.
- All telephone numbers must be direct lines and not switchboards or receptions
- Person appearing – requires actual practitioner involved, please refrain from using generic organisation addresses.
- Please ensure you have read and understood the Local Court guide for virtual appearances. Please ensure this form is submitted as early as possible and as a minimum 48 hours prior to the day before the Court proceedings are listed unless in urgent circumstances.

## SUBMITTING THIS FORM

This form can be printed, completed and scanned to the relevant Local Court OR if you request an email copy or access the word version of this form you can send electronically by:

- hovering over the top left hand corner of the table above, until you see a small arrow, see yellow highlight above;
- left click on mouse and press copy;
- open an email and click paste;
- complete the details in the table and send to the below email address.

Darwin: [DLC.Operations@nt.gov.au](mailto:DLC.Operations@nt.gov.au)

Youth Court: [Darwin.ChildrensCourt@nt.gov.au](mailto:Darwin.ChildrensCourt@nt.gov.au)

Alice Springs: [ASLC.Listings@nt.gov.au](mailto:ASLC.Listings@nt.gov.au) (please copy in the relevant registry as well) see virtual appearance guide

Katherine: [Katherine.LocalCourt@nt.gov.au](mailto:Katherine.LocalCourt@nt.gov.au)

Tennant Creek: [TCLC.Registry@nt.gov.au](mailto:TCLC.Registry@nt.gov.au)

Subject line of email: **Virtual appearance - name (of matter) - date**

For urgent issues please call the relevant registry