

Land Court Standing Order 2-26: Remote Hearings for Court Events

ADOPTED DATE: 05/15/2026

EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/1/2026

UPDATES: Adopted May 15, 2026, effective June 1, 2026.

I. Introduction

The Trial Court, including the Land Court Department, recognizes that the use of remote hearings, including trials and all other court events conducted using all available technology, such as telephone, videoconferencing (e.g., ZOOM), or other comparable technology, may provide resource and cost savings, and enhance access to justice, including, in certain cases, where witnesses and other participants are incarcerated, unable to appear personally in court, or located outside of the Commonwealth or at substantial distance from the courtroom.

Any department of the Trial Court may, by standing order, permit the use of remote hearings in court event types designated by the departmental Chief Justice. This standing order identifies court events in the Land Court for which remote hearings may, in appropriate cases, be permitted.

II. Designation of Land Court case events; procedure.

A.

The Land Court Department shall permit the use of remote hearings in any court events in any case type within the court's jurisdiction where that use is determined by the judge presiding over the case, in his or her discretion, to be lawful and appropriate. Use of remote hearings must take place in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and guidelines, including, by way of example, the applicable rules and law of procedure and evidence. The judge shall consider all appropriate factors when determining whether use of a remote hearing would be appropriate and proper in a particular court event. This standing order does not create any right to the use of remote hearings in any particular case or case event where the presiding judge determines, in his or her discretion, that it would not be appropriate to do so.

B.

Requests to use a remote hearing in a particular court event may be proposed to the court by one or more of the parties, or remote hearing use may be raised by the presiding judge. Parties requesting the use of remote hearings are strongly encouraged to do so well in

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advance of the event to afford adequate opportunity for necessary arrangements to be made.

C.

This standing order in no way affects or limits the availability or use of conventional telephone audio conferencing, which the Land Court employs regularly.

D.

In all cases where a remote hearing has been authorized by the presiding judge, the event shall proceed on the record, with the audio content recorded by electronic means.

E.

The Land Court Department may promulgate standard forms and procedures for use in requesting, considering, and in appropriate cases authorizing, the use of remote hearings for court events.

F.

“Judge,” as used in this standing order, includes (a) the Chief Justice and the Associate Justices of the Land Court Department, and (b) the Land Court’s Recorder and Deputy Recorder when they are hearing and deciding cases for tax foreclosure and for redemption from tax titles pursuant to chapter sixty.

G.

No person shall take any photographs, or make any recording or transmission by electronic means, of a remote or hybrid court hearing, without prior authorization from the judge or recorder having immediate supervision over the remote or hybrid hearing, consistent with Supreme Judicial Court Rule 1:19, which governs electronic access to the courts.

H.

For purposes of public access to in-person, remote, or hybrid hearings that are open to the public, members of the public may access court hearings as follows:

1. For in-person hearings, where no party appears remotely, members of the public may attend in person or listen to the audio of the hearing by dialing into the public access telephone line.

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2. For remote hearings, where all parties attend remotely, members of the public may listen to the audio of the hearing by dialing into the public access telephone line.
3. For hybrid hearings, where at least one party attends in person, while at least one other party or participant appears remotely, members of the public may attend in person or may listen to the audio of the hearing by dialing into the public access telephone line.

Members of the public seeking specific information or instructions on public access to in-person, remote, or hybrid hearings in a particular case shall contact the Recorder's Office for further details.

I.

This Standing Order 2-26 supersedes Standing Order 1-20, dated February 24, 2020.

/s/ Gordon H. Piper
Gordon H. Piper
Chief Justice of the Land Court