

Effective March 18, 2024

PROCEDURES REGARDING TELEPHONIC APPEARANCES FOR THE HONORABLE MARK D. HOULE

(Revised 3/14/2024)

Telephonic appearances are allowed in matters before Judge Mark D. Houle in Courtroom 301, except the following:

1. Trials and evidentiary hearings (all counsel and all witnesses must appear in person).
2. Chapter 11 **initial** status conferences **and confirmation hearings** (debtor's counsel must appear in person; other parties in interest may appear telephonically).
3. Adversary proceeding pretrial conferences (all trial counsel must appear in person).

Any other matter designated by the court as requiring a personal appearance.

In order to appear telephonically counsel must adhere to the following procedure:

TELEPHONIC PROCEDURES FOR HEARINGS ON OR AFTER MARCH 18, 2024

***NOTE: PRIOR TO MARCH 18, 2024, CONTINUE TO USE JUDGE HOULE'S AT&T LINE AT 1-877-873-8018, PASSCODE 5655967. BEGINNING ON MARCH 18, USE ZOOM AUDIO. SEE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW.**

HOW TO ARRANGE A TELEPHONIC APPEARANCE

Individuals should arrange telephonic appearances by emailing chambers at [Chambers M Houle@cacb.uscourts.gov](mailto:CHoule@cacb.uscourts.gov), **no later than 12:00 noon the day prior to the hearing.** Failure to register before the deadline adversely impacts the Courtroom Deputy and the court's ability to conduct hearings. Repeated violation of this rule may result in sanctions

The subject line of the email should be "Registration – Telephonic Appearance" and the email should contain:

1. Appearing counsel's full name, phone number, client's full name, and client's relationship to the case (i.e. debtor, movant, secured creditor, plaintiff, etc.). (If a party is not represented by counsel, include your full name, phone number, and relationship to the case).

2. Hearing date, time, and calendar number (which can be found on the tentative ruling/posted calendar on the court's website).
3. Debtor's name and case number and, if applicable, adversary case name and number.

The email should be sent from an email address that is monitored because the court may have questions or directions regarding the appearance. The court **will not** confirm the registration by email or telephone. Counsel's name and telephone number will instead be listed on the tentative ruling page, which will be updated periodically. Please only contact the court regarding a registration if it is not listed on the tentative ruling page *after* the deadline to register.

PROCEDURE FOR TELEPHONIC APPEARANCE

Join the hearing 10 minutes before the hearing time.

Procedure for joining the call effective **March 18, 2024**

- Call the toll-free **Zoom Audio line at 1 (833) 568-8864**.
- Enter the meeting ID: **1605223909** followed by #.
- Press # again to bypass entry of the participant ID.
- Enter the passcode **9252024** followed by #.
- After roll call is completed and the DECRO connect the call to the courtroom, keep your phone on mute until your hearing matter is called by Judge Houle.

NOTE – Zoom audio access will only be available by calling the telephone number and no video appearances will be possible.

It is the individual's responsibility to dial into the call prior to the scheduled hearing. The court **does not** place a call to those appearing.

Zoom audio access will only be available by calling the telephone number and no video appearances will be possible. **Parties must use an actual telephone to connect to the call. DO NOT use a computer or application as this has caused disturbances in prior hearings and may result in disruption of the call for the court and other participants.**

Telephonic appearances are connected directly with the courtroom's public address system and electronic recording equipment. **To ensure the quality of the telephonic appearance, the use of cellular phones is strongly discouraged. If an individual's poor cellular phone connection does not allow the Court to hear or understand the individual, or for the Court to accurately record the audio for transcription, the court may ask that individual to disconnect from the hearing and the individual will otherwise be deemed to have waived his or her appearance in the matter. Similarly, if a cellular phone disconnects during a hearing, the party appearing by cellular phone will be deemed to have waived his or her appearance. As the Zoom Audio line is "open" without an operator to mute individual parties, Judge Houle requests that all parties appearing observe professional telephone etiquette, including keeping the phone on mute other than when their matter is called, and keeping a quiet ambient background, to ensure that the process works smoothly and effectively for all parties.**

After you have placed your call you will be able to hear the matters before yours just as if you were in the courtroom. Judge Houle will call the case, request appearances, and proceed

with the hearing. Generally, appearances in the courtroom will be taken first. Please wait for the courtroom appearances to be completed before speaking or making your own appearance. Each time you speak, you should identify yourself for the record. The court's teleconferencing system allows more than one speaker to be heard, so the judge can interrupt a speaker to ask a question or redirect the discussion. When the judge informs the participants that the hearing is completed, you may disconnect, and the next case will be called.

COMPLIANCE

Telephonic appearances by multiple participants are only possible when there is compliance with every procedural requirement. Sanctions may be imposed when there is any material disruptive deviation from the required procedures, or the court determines that an individual's conduct makes telephonic appearances inappropriate. Sanctions may include dropping a matter from calendar, continuing the hearing, proceedings in the absence of an unavailable participant, monetary sanctions, or a permanent prohibition against an individual appearing telephonically.

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