HCSC IT Department

April 21, 2020

Videoconferencing Best Practices for Court Appearances

1. Have the right light
    a. Have light facing toward or to the side of your face. Light coming from behind will cause your face to silhouette, or eclipse your face.
    b. Ensure there is enough light for the camera to expose you. A very dark room will cause the video to be grainy.
2. Frame the camera
    a. If possible, try to position the camera at eye-level.
    b. Try to have the camera within arms-length of your face. This will also ensure the microphone is close enough for participants to hear you.
    c. Be sure to look directly at the camera while speaking if possible. This will ensure your voice is being projected directly toward the microphone.
3. Select proper on-camera clothing and environment.
    a. Attire should be professional and appropriate for an in-person court appearance.
    b. Some clothing colors or patterns such as stripes can cause “artifacting” in video. This is especially noticeable while using:
    c. Custom backgrounds, also known as Chroma. This feature will change your background to something of your choosing. If you elect to use this feature, please be sure that the colors of your clothing do not interfere with the background as this option can sometimes completely cover your face. Also note that rapid movement can cause superimposed participants to be distorted or otherwise unclear. When in doubt, please use a normal, non-digital background that is clean, uncluttered and distraction-free, without large text or novelty items.

4. Audio levels
    a. Prior to joining a meeting, it is very important to check your microphone levels. Open the audio settings, select the microphone you wish to use and ensure that you can be heard and the program is detecting your voice.
    b. Be sure that your environment if free from ambient noise. Music, Television, background conversations, etc. will make your speech unclear and will interrupt other participants trying to speak.
    c. Become familiar with the program’s mute features. Most of the time when joining, you will automatically be muted. The host of the meeting has the ability to unmute you, but in most cases, you can unmute yourself. The best practice usually is to stay muted until you’re ready to speak. Speak, then mute yourself when finished speaking.
    d. Do not speak while others are speaking. Most programs will mute all people who aren’t speaking so should others begin speaking, it can cut out audio from the primary speaker.
    e. Participants who phone into meetings sometimes are not muted properly while not speaking. If possible, use the mute switch/button on your handset to mute yourself while you aren’t speaking.
    f. If using an app on your phone or tablet, place the device on a stable surface and try to refrain from touching the device once connected to a meeting. This will eliminate scrapes and muffles while shifting the device in your hand.