



HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT

Date: 20/02/2024

C I R C U L A R

No. ITC/234/2024

REVISED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR HYBRID HEARING OF CASES IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT

The High Court of Gujarat started the hybrid mode of hearing w.e.f. 13/06/2023, based on the Standard Operating Procedure issued vide [Circular No. ITC/98/2023, dated 13/06/2023](#). Initially, the High Court started Hybrid Hearing on pilot basis for the designated Courts only and thereafter, based on successful implementation of the pilot of the Hybrid Hearing in the designated Courts, vide [Circular No. ITC/194/2023, dated 27/09/2023](#), the Hybrid Hearing was implemented on regular basis for all the remaining Division Benches, Single Judge Benches (and also Larger Benches constituted from time to time) of the High Court of Gujarat for all days starting with the causelists for 29th September, 2023 onwards.

Now, Hon'ble the Supreme Court of India vide [order dated 06/10/2023, passed in writ petition \(Criminal\) No.351/2023](#), issued directions with regard to the Hybrid Hearing of the Court Proceedings. Accordingly, based on the directions issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the above matter and in supersession of the earlier Standard Operating Procedure issued vide Circular No. ITC/98/2023, dated 13/06/2023, the following guidelines are issued for the Hybrid Hearing:

- i.** Display Name of the Advocate joining in the Zoom VC shall be properly set by the participant with prefix of Serial No followed by exact and actual name of the Ld. Advocate, so that the Court Master knows beforehand whom to be admitted in the particular matter on hand. If appearing in more than one matter, Sr. Nos of all such matters shall have to be prefixed.
- ii.** Registered Zoom Users, also with a free basic account, only shall be allowed to join the VC Hearing Session to avoid any identity issues.
- iii.** There shall be no need for prior application or approval to join Video Conferencing hearing of any Court
- iv.** VC Joining Link shall be published in the Causelists published for the particular day to be made available on the High Court Case Status website, High Court Official Telegram Channel, Causelist Emails sent to the Ld. Advocates.
- v.** Court decorum shall be adhered to by the VC participants in all Court hearings.
- vi.** Participants should avoid using multiple devices at remote location

to eliminate the chance of echo/ disturbance.

- vii.** The Advocate must be dressed in professional attire. If the advocate is not dressed in professional attire, the right of audience may be withdrawn by the Court. Similarly, a party in person must be appropriately dressed.
- viii.** Court proceedings conducted through video conferencing are judicial proceedings for all purposes, and all protocols applicable to physical Courts shall apply to virtual proceedings.
- ix.** Cell phones of all participants shall be switched off or kept in aeroplane mode during the proceedings.
- x.** The Advocate/party in person may log in from his office, residence, conference room, etc., but not from a vehicle like a car. The remote location should be quiet and have sufficient internet coverage. The Advocate/Party should have the camera switched on during Court proceedings. All participants should endeavour to look into the camera, remain attentive and not engage in any other activity during the proceedings.
- xi.** Only the Advocate/duly authorized person in the matter would be entitled to address the Court. The Court Master concerned may mute/unmute any other participant(s).
- xii.** Advocates/participants may regulate their microphones to avoid disturbing the Court proceedings. At the time of joining, the microphone should be kept muted. The microphone may be unmuted only when the matter is called out. The Court may direct the Court coordinator to mute the microphone of an advocate/participant if there is a disturbance in the Court proceedings.
- xiii.** If any participant indulges in an act which is considered inappropriate, she/he/they may be excluded from the VC proceedings, and action as directed by the Court may be taken in the matter.
- xiv.** No recording of the Court proceedings is allowed.
- xv.** If the number of participants who have joined the virtual proceedings exceeds or is likely to exceed the maximum log-ins permitted by the software, the Court Master concerned, in the first instance, may remove viewers not participating in the Court proceedings. Advocates/litigants appearing in later items may also be requested to log out.
- xvi.** In cases where *in-camera* proceedings are required to be held, virtual hearings may be restricted to the parties and/or their advocates.
- xvii.** The present Standard Operating Procedure shall be in addition to the Video Conferencing Rules notified by the High Court and not in derogation thereof.

Sd/-

REGISTRAR GENERAL