

Board Practice Direction: Guidelines for Participants in Remote Hearings

This Guide is intended to help participants who are participating in a Board hearing remotely via an online link.

1. **Raise any concerns at the earliest opportunity with the Board Officer :**

- If an online hearing is proposed or scheduled, please advise the Board Officer or the Board member at the prehearing telephone conference of any difficulties you may have with technology and/or participating in an online hearing for *any* reason (including raising any issues that might affect your ability to participate remotely confidentially with the Board Officer).
- You are entitled to ask to appear in person. If you would prefer to appear in person, you should advise the Board Officer of this.

2. **Before the hearing:** You will be given a link to an online virtual meeting room (VMR). The Licensed Building Practitioners Board uses Zoom meetings. Please use only this link. **Do not share the link you have been given with anyone.**

3. **Connectivity:** A strong and stable internet connection (preferably broadband or Wi-Fi) is desirable. Otherwise any stable high-speed data connection. Please let the Board Officer know if you do not have access to either.

4. **Test call:** If you wish to have a test call before the day of the hearing, please let the Board Officer know and this will be arranged.

5. **Device and hardware:** A computer or laptop with a microphone and camera; headphones with an in-built microphone (strongly recommended), or, as a minimum, you can use the device microphone with regular headphones.

6. **Positioning:**

- Sit in a private room where, if possible, you cannot be overheard or interrupted.
- Sit in front of your device before a **blank background or blur your background** – this reduces picture distortion for other participants.
- Ensure that your background is appropriate, and if at work, there are no confidential items that can be seen.
- Try to sit as close to your device as possible. If you are too far away, you cannot be seen or heard and you will be asked to move closer to the camera and microphone.
- When positioning the camera on your device, be mindful of camera angles and glare from windows.
- Ensure that the camera captures your head.

Once the hearing has started:

- Link into the online hearing 10 minutes before you are expected to join to ensure your device is working properly.
- You will go straight to a waiting room where you will wait for the hearing host to admit you.
- Ensure your name on your screen is correct and appropriate so the hearing host knows who is waiting.
- Once you are admitted to the hearing room, and you have announced who you are, make sure that your microphone is placed on mute at all times until you are asked to speak.
- All proceedings before the Board are recorded.
- All witnesses are required to give their evidence under oath or affirmation. Given the hearing is proceeding remotely the option of an oath on the Bible is not available. Witnesses will, therefore, be required to take an affirmation, and this will be administered by a Board member or Board Officer.
- If you are unable to hear the other hearing attendees or need a question directed to you repeated, please advise the Presiding Board Member.
- If you require a break for any reason, please advise the Presiding Board Member.
- The Presiding Board Member will explain how the hearing will proceed and establish some ground rules for who is to speak and when.

7. Important information for participating in a remote hearing:

- Speak directly into the microphone and look directly at your screen.
- Be familiar with how to mute your microphone and turn your video off.
- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
- Reduce your body movements as much as possible.
- Speak more slowly than a normal pace and speak as clearly as possible.
- Ensure that mobile phones are on silent and switch off notifications on the device being used for the hearing.

8. **Technical failure:** In the event of an equipment failure or technical issue, the Board Officer or Presiding Board Member will attempt to re-establish connection. If this is not possible, the Presiding Board Member will decide on the appropriate action to then be taken. If this situation occurs, please ensure you have a mobile phone accessible to enable another means of communication.