

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS Standard Operating Procedures		
Policy Name: Video Court Services		
Policy Number: 222.13	Effective Date: 11/12/2019	Page Number: 1 of 5
Authority: Commissioner	Originating Division: Facilities Division	Access Listing: Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

The purpose of Video Court Services is to provide the Judicial Circuits the ability to conduct hearings in their courtrooms with offenders currently serving a sentence in a Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) Facility through video capabilities. The State Prisons that are designated video sites will comply with these requests and produce the offender for video hearings.

II. Authority:

- A. Georgia Uniform Superior Court Rule 9.2. Video-conferencing; and
- B. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): 103.63 American with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title II Provisions, 222.05 Court Productions, and 227.03 Access to Courts.

III. Definitions: None.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

- A. A Judicial Circuit, or Court, will submit a Video Hearing Request through Video.Hearing@gdc.ga.gov to GDC Court Services (Court Services) to schedule a video hearing with an offender who is currently serving a sentence in a state facility.
 - 1. This request must be submitted by the Court within seven (7) business days of the requested hearing date;
 - 2. Once a request for a video hearing is submitted, Court Services will verify with the court calendar in Scribe to ensure:
 - a. There are no conflicts with the requested date; and
 - b. Time.
 - 3. If no conflict, the hearing request will be entered into Scribe by Court Services, which will notify the facility where the offender is housed that a hearing has been scheduled;

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4. An email will be sent back to the requesting Judicial Circuit by Court Services confirming:
 - a. The hearing being scheduled; and
 - b. That GDC will comply with producing the offender before the video hearing camera at the designated date and time.
5. If there is a conflict, Court Services will contact the requesting Judicial Circuit to schedule the hearing for an alternate date and time;
6. Upon receiving notification that GDC can comply with the video hearing request, the Judicial Circuit will send any documentation needed for the hearing to Court Services;
7. The documentation will be uploaded into Scribe under Offender Documents;
8. The facility designee will print a copy of the documentation for the offender;
9. Court Services will upload the document into DocuSign for the facility designee to have the offender electronically sign the document during the court hearing;
10. The court document will be emailed back to the designated Judicial Circuit within twenty-four (24) hours of the hearing;
11. A designated staff member at the facility will turn on the video hearing equipment within forty-eight (48) hours of the hearing date to ensure:
 - a. Video equipment is working properly; and
 - b. All system updates are able to run.
12. Facilities may leave the equipment on to allow for system updates to occur;
13. The video hearing remote control device will:

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- a. Remain outside of the video hearing room; and
 - b. In the possession of a GDC staff member.
14. On the day of the hearing, facility staff will ensure the offender is in the designated waiting area for their hearing at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the hearing time;
15. Facility staff will visually inspect the offender to ensure:
- a. They are clean;
 - b. Well groomed; and
 - c. Their uniform is neat and pressed.
16. The offender should be reminded:
- a. They are going to be on a live video in the Judicial Circuit of their hearing; and
 - b. Are expected to behave as they would in a courtroom.
17. The offender should be:
- a. Given a copy of their court documents, which were uploaded into Scribe under Offender Documents; and
 - b. Be given enough time before their hearing to review the documents.
18. The offender should be reminded that if they have any questions throughout the hearing that they can request to speak with their attorney privately;
19. During the video hearing, facility staff will remain outside the door of the video hearing room;
20. A designated staff member will have:

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- a. The iPad with DocuSign; and
 - b. The documents ready for signature.
21. The designee will provide the iPad to the inmate during the hearing when the inmate needs to sign the court documents to capture an electronic signature;
 22. Once the document is signed, the designee will remove the iPad and remain outside of the room;
 23. During an offender's hearing, GDC staff should not be in the room with the offender unless there is a security risk;
 24. In the event of a security risk, the security staff will stand off to the side of the video screen;
 25. If the offender or the offender's attorney wishes to have a private conversation during the hearing, GDC staff will provide a designated area for a private, non-recorded, conference call;
 26. If an attorney call is requested during the video hearing, GDC staff will announce to the court the phone number which the attorney will need to call;
 27. GDC Staff will:
 - a. Answer the designated phone; and
 - b. Verify the identity of the caller.
 28. In the event that a use of force is needed during a video hearing, security staff is expected to follow the proper policy and procedures regarding use of force;
 29. Once the hearing has concluded, the offender will be escorted back to their assigned area with a copy of the hearing paperwork for their records;
 30. The electronically signed document will be sent back to the Judicial Circuit within twenty-four (24) hours of the court hearing; and

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31. If paperwork was manually signed during the hearing, the facility designee will overnight the original documents to the Judicial Circuit.

B. Room Set Up:

1. The designated video hearing room will include:
 - a. A video monitor;
 - b. Table;
 - c. Chair;
 - d. The State of Georgia Flag;
 - e. The United States of America Flag; and
 - f. Soundboards.
2. Facilities will have an identified waiting area for offenders that is approved by Court Services; and
3. Facilities will ensure that reasonable accommodations are made for any persons with a disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

V. Attachments:

Attachment 1: Court Services Video Hearings Frequently Asked Questions

VI. Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:

Attachment 1 shall be utilized until it is revised or becomes obsolete.