

PROTOCOL FOR CHAPTER 13 HEARINGS BEFORE JUDGE SIMPSON

Effective April 14, 2021

1. All Chapter 13 confirmation hearings and related hearings heard on Chapter 13 Docket Days¹ will be conducted remotely by use of Zoom for Government (“Zoomgov”) videoconference technology.
2. The Court will establish a Zoomgov meeting for each Chapter 13 Trustee’s docket. The log-in information (Zoomgov meeting number and password) will be communicated to parties by the Chapter 13 Trustee.
3. Attorneys and their clients (and unrepresented debtors) are expected to work cooperatively with Chapter 13 Trustees to resolve issues by the end of the day before the scheduled hearing.
4. Up until 30 minutes before the scheduled hearing time, the Chapter 13 Trustees will continue to work with parties to resolve issues so that as many cases as possible can be dealt with on a consensual basis at the time of the podium call. If a consensual resolution is reached, the Chapter 13 Trustee will advise parties that they are excused from appearance at the hearing.
5. If the parties expect a confirmation hearing to involve lengthy testimony and the introduction of exhibits, they should contact the Courtroom Deputy and arrange for the hearing to be specially set.
6. All parties should connect to the Zoomgov videoconference hearing at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled hearing time.
7. All attorneys, clients, and other parties are expected to adhere to social distancing and other safety guidelines, as well as any applicable orders restricting activities, when participating in the Zoomgov videoconference hearing.
8. Before the judge takes the bench and any cases are called, the Courtroom Deputy and Chapter 13 Trustee will identify the parties, make organizational announcements, and advise the parties of the order in which cases will be called.
9. All parties will be placed on mute until their case is called and they are called upon by the judge.
10. The Court will dismiss parties from the Zoomgov videoconference as cases are completed.
11. Parties shall participate by videoconference (i.e., not by telephone only), wear court appropriate attire, and participate from a quiet space.
12. If you have questions about these procedures, you may contact Judge Simpson’s chambers by email at LSS_Virtual_Hearings@mdb.uscourts.gov. You should also review the Court’s general videoconference protocols available on the Court’s webpage at www.mdb.uscourts.gov/hearings.

¹ The Court sets most Chapter 13 matters on a Chapter 13 Docket Day, including, but not limited to, confirmation of Chapter 13 plans, motions to modify plans, Chapter 13 trustee’s motions to dismiss, and motions to sell.

13. If parties encounter technical difficulties during a Zoomgov videoconference hearing, they may contact Judge Simpson's chambers at (301) 344-8040, or via email using the LSS_Virtual_Hearings@mdb.uscourts.gov email address.
14. These procedures for regularly scheduled Chapter 13 confirmation hearings will remain in effect until further notice.

End of Protocol