



TIPS FOR ON-LINE MEDIATION PARTICIPANTS

If you are getting ready to attend a virtual mediation, you may understandably be nervous about how it is going to work. To get you ready, I want to walk you step-by-step through the process I follow, so that you know what to expect when mediation day arrives. Hopefully, reading through this article and doing some advance preparation will help you understand the technology and calm your nerves.

ZOOM Account

You will need to set up a Zoom account. It is free of charge, but it adds an extra layer of security to the process by requiring you to sign in to participate in the meeting. You may note that the free account only allows you to host meetings that are no longer than 40 minutes at a time. Do not worry about the time-limit, because, as the mediator, I have a paid plan and can host the meeting for as long as I need. Your free account will not limit your participation in the mediation. <https://zoom.us/>

If you would like help with Zoom functionality, Zoom has some good tutorial videos on their website that you can watch to better understand the technology. ([Zoom Tutorials](#)) It's also a good idea to test logging on in advance of mediation day. That way, you will know how to connect when mediation day arrives.

Computer Equipment

You will need a computer or other device from which to participate. It helps to have a large enough screen so that you can see the other participants clearly as well as any documents or other items that might be viewed during the mediation.

If your computer or device does not have a built-in camera and microphone, then you will need to procure collateral accessories. You can call in from your phone for audio and the call-in numbers will be included in the meeting invitation.

It is especially important that you are clearly visible and that your audio is clear. You will also want to be set up in a well-lit and private location. If you are planning to participate on an iPad or other mobile device, it is a good idea to download the free app in advance. The app is available for both Apple and Android devices.

Some people have had challenges with their internet service slowing down during a mediation. While a slowdown is not always avoidable, it helps to disconnect other devices from your internet service during the mediation. For example, disconnecting your mobile phone from the internet (unless you are using it for the mediation) and not streaming music or television during the meeting helps save some

bandwidth for the mediation itself. Also, close down any unnecessary programs that are running on your computer. It can also be helpful to access Zoom through Chrome rather than other internet browsers

Meeting Log-In and Passwords

The parties and their attorneys, if any, will be provided with a unique meeting ID number and password for the meeting. Do not share this ID number or password with anyone. Confidentiality and privacy are paramount to mediation and there should not be any outside third parties attempting to participate in the mediation without the consent of all parties.

Waiting Rooms and Break-Out Rooms

When you arrive for the mediation, you will first be in a waiting room. When you are in the waiting room, you will not be able to see or hear anyone else, including the mediator who is hosting the meeting. The mediator can send you a message to let you know s/he is aware you've arrived, but you will not be able to communicate with each other until s/he's admitted you to the mediation.

If the parties are represented by counsel, then the mediator will admit the party and their attorney and then put them into a breakout room, which is a virtual conference room, where they can speak privately and get themselves situated. Once everyone has arrived and gotten settled, the mediator will bring everyone together for a short joint session to go over the mediator's rules and set expectations for the mediation.

After the mediator concludes the introduction, the parties will be moved back into their own breakout rooms where the mediator will meet with them separately. When parties are in breakout rooms, they will not be able to see or hear the other parties outside of their breakout room. It is just like being in a real conference room with the door closed and the other parties being in a separate conference room down the hall. If a party leaves a breakout room, they will be disconnected from the meeting and must rejoin. In other words, you cannot virtually wander the halls to attempt entry into other breakout rooms.

When you are in the breakout room, you can request the mediator to come back to your room by using the "ask for help" button on your toolbar. It will send the mediator a message that your room is requesting his/her return.

Seeing Everyone

Some parties have complained that they cannot see everyone at the same time and only see a big window of the person who is talking with the other parties in smaller windows along the top of the screen. There is a button on your screen that says, "gallery view" or "speaker view." If you change that to gallery view, you will be able to see everyone in the breakout room at the same time.

If You Get Disconnected

If at any time you become disconnected from the meeting, rejoin as soon as possible. It is also a good

idea to send the mediator's office an email to let them know that you have been disconnected, because the mediator will need to admit you back into the meeting when you reconnect. If the mediator is in a breakout room, s/he will not receive a notification that you are in the waiting room, unless you make it known to someone at the mediator's office.

The mediator's officer email address is ContactUs@REMS-US.com and the US telephone number is +1 510 301 2081.

No Recordings

The mediation session will not be recorded via Zoom and the mediator does not consent to any outside recordings of the session by the parties by any other means. This includes transmission over an open telephone line or other external means.

Be Patient

Technology can present challenges from time-to-time, but overall, most technical issues can be resolved in short order and your mediation can proceed smoothly once again.

If you have any question about the above information or would like to schedule a short orientation Zoom session in advance of your first mediation, please contact our office

REAL ESTATE MEDIATION SERVICE, LLC