



THE LABOUR COURT  
An Chúirt Oibreachais



# USER'S GUIDE TO VIRTUAL LABOUR COURT HEARINGS USING CISCO WEBEX

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In Response to COVID-19, to the extent possible, proceedings identified as being suitable will be listed for hearing using remote access technology known as Cisco Webex (Webex).
- 1.2. Proceedings conducted in this manner will be referred to as **Virtual Court Hearings**.
- 1.3. This Guide is intended to provide guidance for practitioners and appellants-in-person appearing in Virtual Court Hearings.
- 1.4. **Appendix A** contains illustrative instructions on how to use Webex.

## 2. INITIAL STEPS

- 2.1. The success of a Virtual Court Hearing will depend on the facilities available to parties and their willingness to co-operate with the Court and adapt quickly.
- 2.2. Parties in cases selected as suitable will be contacted by the Court and invited to participate in a virtual hearing of the case in which they are involved. Parties will be asked to confirm that they have access to connectivity and equipment necessary to connect with the internet
- 2.3. Where parties to a selected case have confirmed that they have access to necessary technology the Court will seek submissions and schedule a hearing in the normal manner. All communications in these respects will be by e-mail.

## 3. ESTABLISHING A VIRTUAL HEARING - VIRTUAL COURT HEARING INVITATIONS

- 3.1. Upon request, parties must provide the Court with the individual email addresses for each of the Virtual Court Hearing participants.
- 3.2. Email notifications will then issue to the parties with instructions on how to join the Virtual Court Hearing.
- 3.3. This notification email can be passed on by the representative to other necessary/required attendees of the party involved.

## 4. THE VIRTUAL HEARING - WHAT PARTICIPANTS CAN EXPECT

- 4.1. When you join the Virtual Court Hearing, participants will see their name displayed, along with those of other participants. Participants will also be able to see the live images of the other participants in the Hearing. The Chairman will indicate when the hearing actually commences (see **Appendix A** for instructions on how to use Webex).
- 4.2. Participants should join the Virtual Court Hearing **at least 15 minutes prior to the listing time** to allow sufficient time to address any technical issues. Please note that following the commencement of the hearing, it will not be possible to join the hearing without the express permission of the Chairman.
- 4.3. The use of recording facilities or recording devices for the purpose of recording or making a transcript or otherwise is prohibited.
- 4.4. In the event of unforeseen and unavoidable technological issues, the Court will temporarily adjourn to allow those issues to be addressed by the party experiencing the issues. If the technical issues cannot be resolved such that all parties can participate effectively the hearing will be abandoned without prejudice to any party. Abandoned hearings will be re-scheduled in due course.

## 5. WHAT IS EXPECTED OF PARTICIPANTS

- 5.1. Participants must join a Virtual Hearing from a quiet, secure location.
- 5.2. Participants must ensure that there is sufficient internet coverage in their location whether by direct connection, WIFI or mobile/smart phone hotspot.

- 5.3. When in the Hearing, please mute your microphone when you are not speaking. The Chairman will manage the hearing and will call speakers during the hearing. Microphones and cameras should be tested by participants and be working prior to joining a Virtual Court Hearing.
- 5.4. In general, protocols of a physical Labour Court hearing will be followed in the Virtual Court Hearing subject to any direction of the Chairman.
- 5.5. The Chairman of the Court Division will control the oral contributions of the participants at the hearing, such that any and all oral contributions and interjections are subject to the invitation of the Chairman at all times. Participants must refrain from speaking uninvited and avoid speaking over each other so as to ensure the efficient and smooth running of the Virtual Court Hearing (please see **Appendix B: Rules & Protocols for a Virtual Court Hearing**).

## **6. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1. Written submissions, appendices are to be provided in accordance with the Rules of the Court and in accordance with the timetables set out therein in the normal way.
- 6.2. During this period, however, the Court will accept submissions by e-mail.