

The judges of the Polk County Felony Divisions would like to remind the bar that the felony virtual courtrooms are open for business during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to “essential” proceedings such as arraignments and bond hearings on cases involving inmates, substantial hearing time is available for conducting completely remote “non-essential” proceedings, including motion hearings and evidentiary hearings for both inmates and non-inmates alike. The felony divisions are also equipped to resolve cases by way of plea and sentencing in any case involving an inmate. Plea and sentencing hearings may also be accommodated for persons released from custody in cases which would not require fingerprints or incarceration. (See attached list of circumstances in which fingerprints are required.) Simply contact the assigned judge’s office for available hearing times.

The judges also want to remind practitioners that they, their clients, and other court participants may appear by videoconferencing technology or by telephone at no cost. Witnesses and participants providing testimony must appear by video. The virtual felony courtrooms are supported by user-friendly technology which does not require the purchase or registration of software. Information and instructions for appearing in the Polk Felony virtual courtrooms are attached for your reference. If you have questions or experience technical difficulty, please contact Court Technology by email at [10thVirtualCourtSupport@jud10.flcourts.org](mailto:10thVirtualCourtSupport@jud10.flcourts.org), or by telephone at (863) 534-7788 for assistance.

Most importantly, before saying, “It can’t be done,” contact the judge or Court Technology to see if it can!

### **CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH FINGERPRINTS ARE TAKEN IN THE POLK COUNTY FELONY DIVISIONS**

1. Felony adjudications, but not withholds.
2. Misdemeanor adjudications for the following:
  - a. Battery
  - b. Theft
  - c. Theft of Utility
  - d. Defrauding an Innkeeper
  - e. Criminal Mischief
  - f. DUI
  - g. Prostitution
3. Misdemeanor findings of guilt, regardless of adjudication, for the following:
  - a. Driving While License Suspended or Revoked



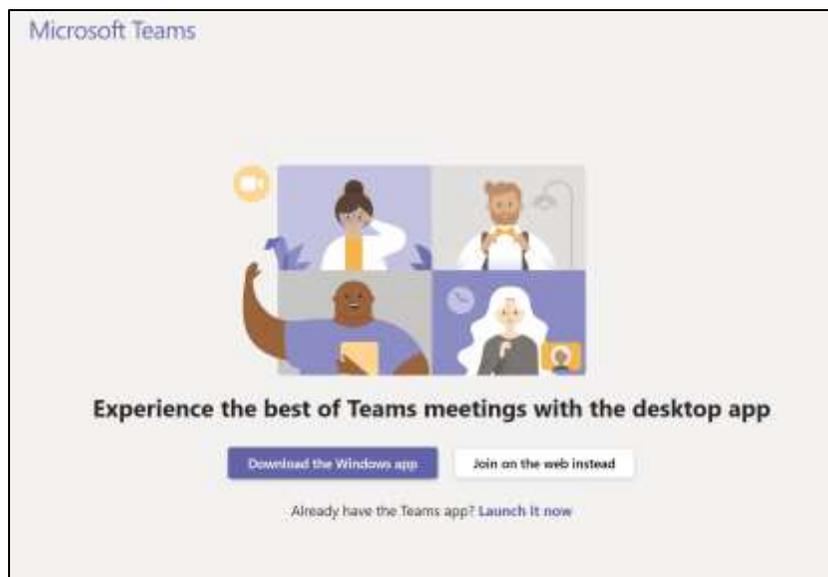
## How to Access the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit's Teams Virtual Courtrooms

### From a Computer:

1. You will need a web camera, microphone, email account and a reliable internet connection.
2. Select the link for the courtroom you wish to connect to that you should have been emailed. For this example, to enter the Main Courtroom, you would select the "Enter Virtual Courtroom Main" link. Please note that the below is a picture of what you may have been sent, not an actual link and the Conference ID has been edited out for privacy, you will see a phone number and a 9 digit code instead of the "EDITED" blocks.



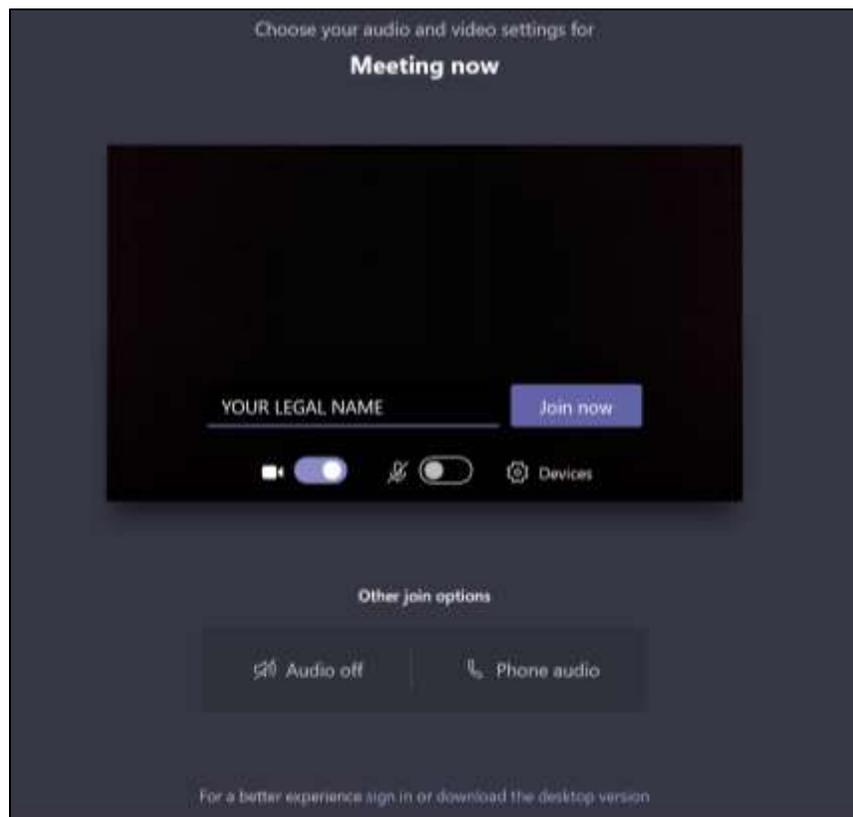
3. Here you will choose your method of connecting to the courtroom. You may download the Microsoft Teams application onto your device or continue using the web browser. Below is what that page should look like. We recommend using the browser at first for a faster experience, and if you encounter audio and/or video problems, it may help to download and install the application. For now, select "Join on the web instead" in your browser. Note, however, the app may provide a better user experience.



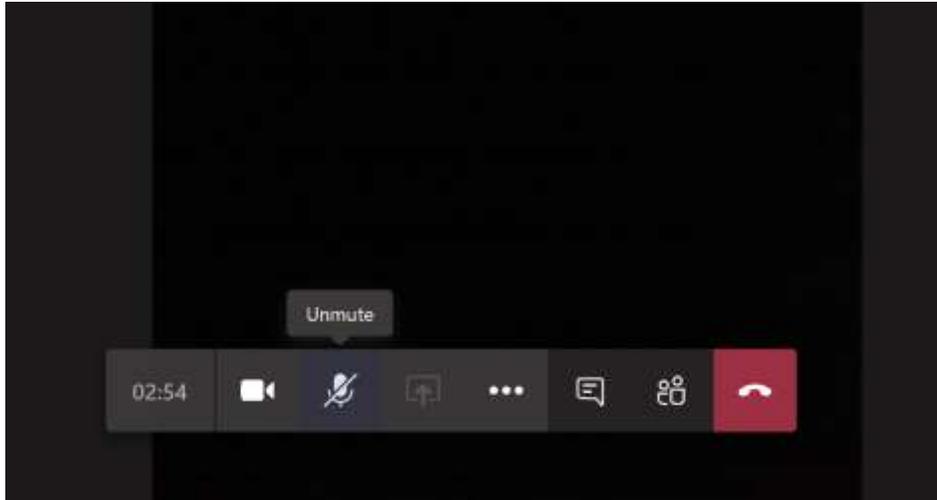
- When you select “Join on the web instead” you may be prompted to allow Microsoft Teams (the application the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit uses for virtual court) to use your camera and microphone. In order to fully utilize virtual court, we recommend selecting “Yes.” This allows your browser to process your video and audio into the virtual courtroom so the Judge and you may see and hear each other. That page may look similar to the picture below. If you select “No” you will have to attend virtual court by phone.



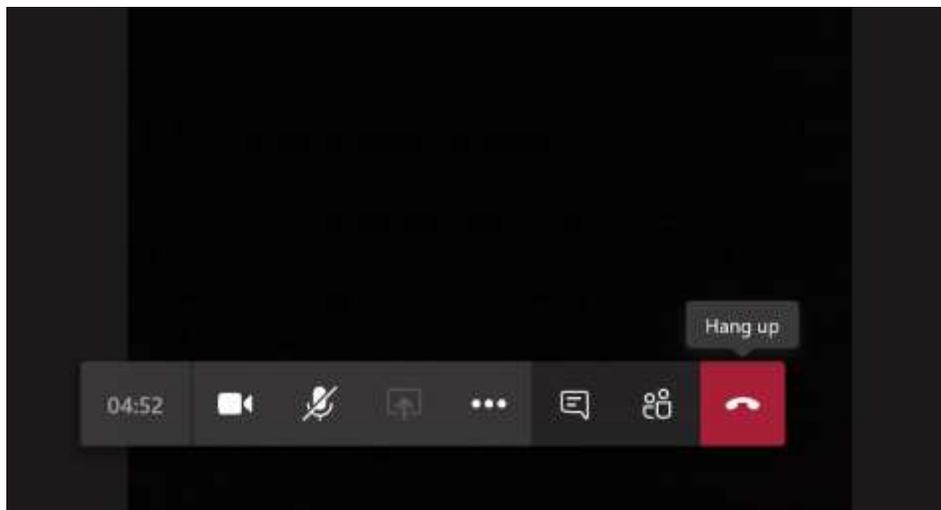
- Once you select “Yes” you will now be prompted to enter in your name, select your audio and video settings, and then join the virtual courtroom. Please enter in your full legal name and enter the virtual courtroom with your video on and your audio **OFF**. Please keep your audio off until the Judge has called your name/case. Your settings prior to entering the virtual courtroom should look similar to the below picture. When ready, select “Join now” and you will enter in the virtual courtroom lobby. From there you will be granted access by the presiding judge or bailiff.



6. Once you are joined in the meeting, please patiently wait for the Judge to call your name and/or case. When in the courtroom, the settings bar at the bottom will auto hide but can be brought back up by moving your cursor. Hover over the microphone and select “Unmute” when the Judge has called your name. Please speak loudly and clearly for the record. If your internet connection is slow, you may experience some delay in audio and/or video.



7. When your case is finished and the Judge has dismissed you, select the “Hang up” button to leave the virtual courtroom. You may now close out of your browser.



**Via Smartphone and/or Tablet:**

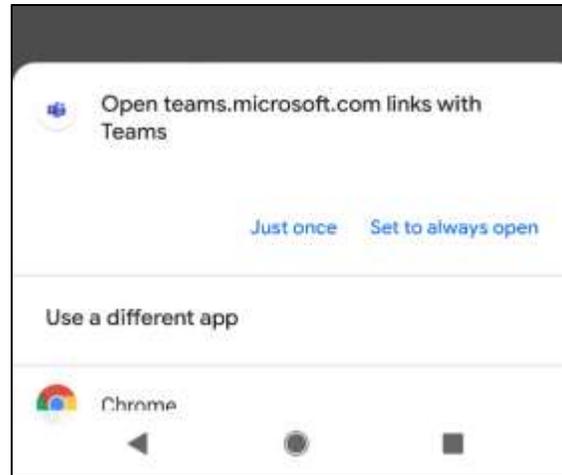
1. Download the Microsoft Teams app from the Apple or Android App store. The logo is pictured to the right.



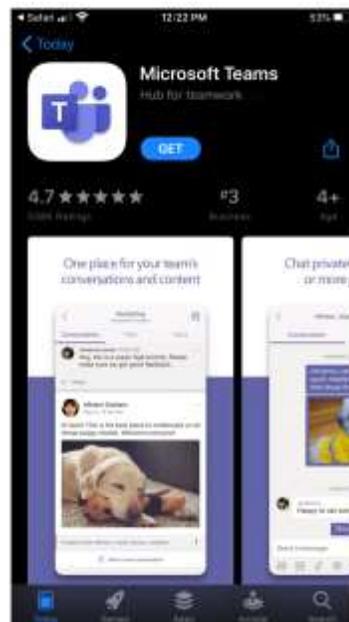
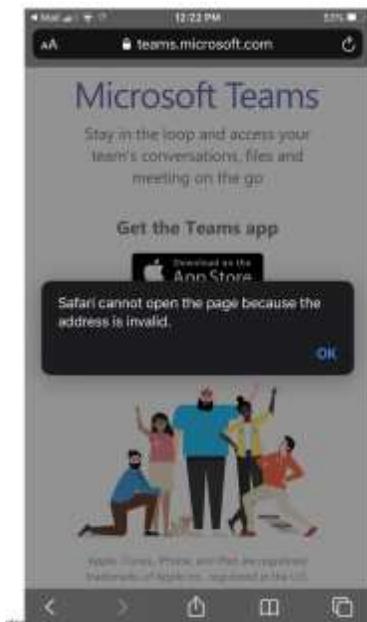
Please note this is a free third party application provided by Microsoft, not the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit.

2. Now select the virtual courtroom link you are trying to access.

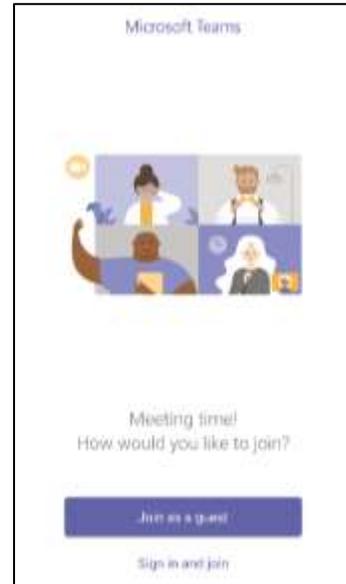
Your smartphone may ask you how to open the link. If you have installed Teams, please use the Teams app to open the virtual courtroom link. For example, to the right is what you may get if you are using an Android device, select “Just once” in this instance.



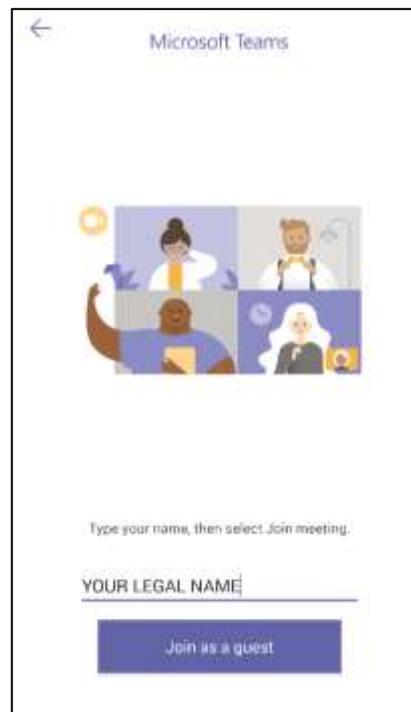
iPhone Example: Follow prompt to quickly download the free app.



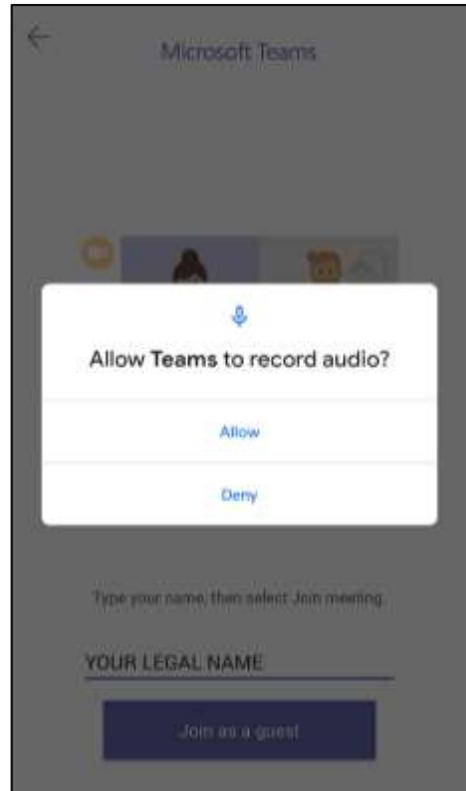
3. Now you should see this screen.  
Select the large purple button labeled "Join as a guest."



4. Now enter in your full legal name and select the large purple "Join as a guest" button once more.



5. If you get this message requesting Teams access to record audio, please select “Allow” so the Judge can see and hear you.

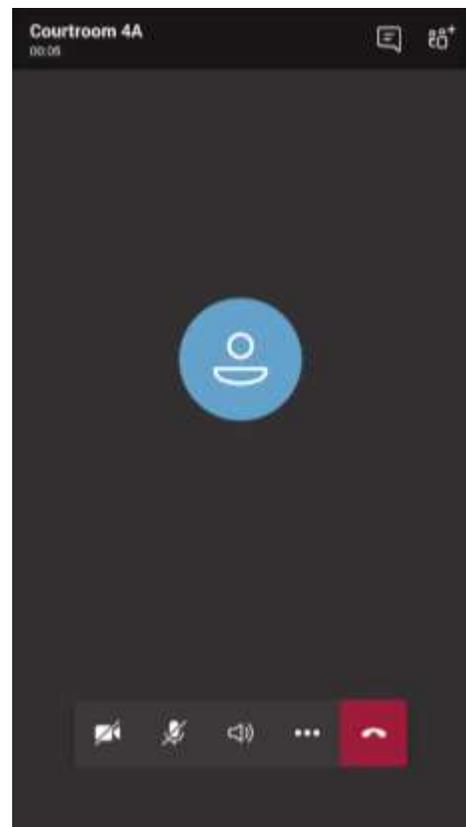


6. You will now join the virtual courtroom. Please **mute your device** when you enter the virtual courtroom by making sure your microphone button at the bottom is set to MUTE. If it is not, please press it one time to mute it, (see example for what the MUTE option should look like, please note the cross through the speaker).

Same can be done for your camera as shown in the example. When the Judge calls your name and/or case number, be sure to unmute by pressing the speaker button again.

7. When you are finished and dismissed, you may exit the virtual courtroom by selecting the red button at the end of the menu bar at the bottom.

If at anytime you cannot locate the bottom menu bar, please tap your device on the screen and it should reappear.



### **Via Telephone:**

1. If you are accessing virtual court by telephone call only, please dial the number provided to you. This is a Microsoft Teams number that will transfer you to the appropriate courtroom by entering in your Conference ID# provided.
2. At the prompt, enter in your 9 digit Conference ID number followed by the pound symbol (#).
3. When you press the pound symbol, it will announce that you are joining and will alert the parties already on the call of you joining with a small “ding” sound, there is no need to announce yourself. Please **mute** or remain quiet until your name and/or case is called.
4. When finished, you may hang up the call.

### **FAQ-Frequently Asked Questions**

- Do I have to pay for MS Teams to attend virtual court? **NO.** The 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit will host the virtual court session via Teams and you will use a guest account.
- What hardware do I need? Internet Connected Computer, Webcam, Mic & Speakers or a Smartphone or Tablet to appear by video. (Telephone to appear by audio only.) Make sure that your microphone and webcam are working prior to connecting to a virtual court proceeding. Turn your volume up as well.
- Do I have to purchase the app for my mobile device? The MS Teams App is a free download from the App Store. You do need this for mobile devices.
- Do I have to pay for a Microsoft account? **No.** You simply login as a guest when connecting to the virtual courtroom. There is no need to register or create an account.
- Do I need an active email account? **Yes.** The court will email you the video link that you will need in order to connect into the virtual courtroom.
- How do I connect? You will receive a Teams Meeting Link when being noticed for your court hearing. About 10mins prior to start time, go ahead and click on the link to be connected into the Teams Virtual Courtroom. You will initially connect to the virtual lobby. Please wait there until you’re granted access into the actual virtual courtroom where you will be addressed by the presiding Judge.
- What if I need other people to attend, like witnesses? Copy and paste the virtual courtroom link into a separate email and forward along with these instructions. Witnesses must appear by video.
- What do I do if I have a technical issue during virtual court? Disconnect (hang up) and immediately reconnect. Same process as the first time you connected. Click the link in your email. Make sure you’re in an area with reliable internet or cellphone signal.
- What do I do if I cannot reconnect? Email [10thVirtualCourtSupport@jud10.flcourts.org](mailto:10thVirtualCourtSupport@jud10.flcourts.org) for assistance.