

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

DISTRICT OF MAINE



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 6, 2020

RE: Protocol for Sidebar Conferences During Video Teleconference Proceedings

In accordance with General Orders 2020-4 and 2020-5, which this Court entered in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), many proceedings that would typically happen in-person are being held by video teleconference. The Court has ensured that vital elements of in-person proceedings can still take place in this remote work environment. One of these elements is sidebar conversations between the Judge and counsel. To better prepare parties and court observers for these sidebars, the Court provides an example below of how it will handle sidebars during a video teleconference hearing:

Judge: For purposes of the sidebar conference, the Clerk of Court will now place all observers and participants, with the exception of the Prosecutor, the Defense Lawyer, the Defendant, the Probation Officer [subject to change depending on circumstances], and the court reporter, into the waiting room. For those of you observing today's proceedings, you will be placed in the waiting room, which is the same virtual environment you experienced while you waited to be admitted to the hearing this morning. You will not be able to hear or see my sidebar conversation with counsel. When we have completed the sidebar conference, the clerk will admit you back into the hearing. You do not need to take any action to rejoin the hearing – it will happen automatically.