

## Philippines: Supreme Court issues New Videoconferencing Rules

### In brief

The Supreme Court has amended its Guidelines on the Conduct of Videoconferencing in court proceedings (“**Amended Guidelines**”), through A.M. No. 24-11-02-SC. The Amended Guidelines will take effect on 16 February 2026.

Under the Amended Guidelines, litigants, witnesses and counsel can now participate in proceedings before the Trial Courts, Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, and Court of Tax Appeals through videoconferencing. This applies to all actions — including criminal actions — and at all stages of the proceedings.

### Five things you need to know about the Amended Guidelines

- 1. Location of participants.** Videoconferencing can be conducted fully or partially remotely. Some participants may be physically present in court while others join online. More importantly, videoconferencing from a location abroad is allowed, provided that the location is a Philippine government office overseas, such as a Philippine consulate or embassy, and the hearing takes place during Philippine courts’ working hours. The Supreme Court may also authorize additional locations abroad in the future.
- 2. How videoconferencing is initiated.** Videoconferencing can be allowed upon the court’s initiative or upon a party’s motion. The court can also, on its own, order that proceedings be conducted through videoconferencing. Accused individuals in a criminal case can also request to participate via videoconference but must file a written waiver of their right to confront witnesses. In all cases, the requesting party must show proof of technical readiness to participate in videoconferencing. The Amended Guidelines set a minimum internet connection speed of at least 4Mbps.
- 3. How videoconferencing is conducted.** The court can grant or deny the motion. If denied, in-person proceedings will continue as scheduled; denials cannot be contested by motion or petition, except on constitutional grounds. If granted, the court will send out the videoconference link at least 24 hours before the scheduled hearing. The link cannot be shared with unauthorized persons, as it constitutes contempt of court. Participants should be in the virtual lobby at least 20 minutes before the scheduled hearing. The court may require witnesses or parties to confirm that they are alone and pan their cameras around to ensure no coaching occurs. Only the court may record proceedings, and in the event of appeals, the recordings form part of the records transmitted to appellate courts. This is a significant development, as it allows appellate courts to personally observe the demeanor of witnesses at the trial court stage.
- 4. Evidence.** Testimonial evidence can be taken remotely, allowing the court to observe the demeanor of witnesses online. Electronic copies of documentary evidence and witness affidavits are required to be submitted to the court in advance. The court can direct that they be shared on screen for purposes of marking, authentication and

presentation during witness testimony. Object evidence may also be presented through videoconferencing.

5. **Facility to be used.** Courts must use only the authorized videoconferencing platform, except for small claims cases where another platform available to the parties may be allowed. Presently, the Supreme Court's authorized platform is Microsoft Teams.

## Why this is relevant for you

The Amended Guidelines signify a progressive step toward increasing the accessibility of court processes to litigants. It can result in cost and time savings, as it should make it easier to schedule hearings. More defined rules on participation of litigants and witnesses abroad may significantly reduce the cost of presenting evidence for foreign companies and individuals, especially once the Supreme Court approves more venues for videoconferencing abroad. Moreover, the ability of appellate courts to review footage of actual witness testimony at the trial court stage may significantly improve the quality of decision-making.



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The law is stated as of 13 February 2026.

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