Appointed Representatives Joining Audio Hearings by Teams

For audio hearings, Hearing Office staff or Verbatim Hearing Reporters call representatives at a direct telephone number to connect them to an audio hearing. Because of Microsoft Teams calling limitations, the telephone number must be a direct line and cannot include an extension or automated menu.

Beginning November 30, 2026, representatives may join eligible audio hearings using a Microsoft Teams invitation and meeting link. Joining through a Microsoft Teams link allows representatives to connect directly to the hearing, receive scheduling updates through the calendar invitation, and avoid waiting for a call from the Hearing Office.

Key Details:

- Beginning **November 2, 2026**, representatives may provide an email address and request to join an audio hearing through a Microsoft Teams link for hearings on or after **November 30, 2026**.
- Representatives should provide their email address as early as possible, and no later than **15 business days before the hearing**, to ensure timely receipt of the invitation.
- For each case, representatives should submit their email address—preferably by uploading it to the electronic file through Electronic Records Express (ERE)—and clearly indicate their preference to join the audio hearing through a Microsoft Teams link.
- Hearing Offices can add only one email address for representative invitations. Representatives should provide an email address for the appointed representative who will attend the hearing. Updates made to the invitation are not automatically sent to forwarded participants.
- Beginning **November 6, 2026**, Hearing Offices will send Microsoft Teams invitations for eligible audio hearings on or after November 30, 2026.
- Representatives should use the link in the email invitation to join the hearing by audio at least **five minutes before** the scheduled start time. After joining, they will enter a virtual lobby until the ALJ admits them to the hearing.
- Microsoft Teams may remove participants from the lobby after approximately 30 minutes. If removed, representatives may use the same link to rejoin and wait to be admitted.
- Cameras will not be used by the ALJ or other participants during an audio hearing.
- Representatives must continue to provide a contact telephone number for all audio hearings. If a representative has not joined through the Microsoft Teams link by the

scheduled hearing start time, the Hearing Office will call the representative at the telephone number provided, consistent with current practice.

- If a representative does not receive an invitation at least **five business days before** the scheduled hearing, they should contact the Hearing Office.

Representatives who join through a Microsoft Teams link may be asked to accept Microsoft's terms of use and privacy policies. These policies are managed by Microsoft and are not controlled by SSA.

For questions, representatives should contact the Hearing Office.