

Video-Conference Oral Proceedings

Applicants can request for EPO examination division oral proceedings to proceed via video-conference. Video-conferencing is not available for EPO opposition division and board of appeal oral proceedings.

How do applicants obtain video-conference oral proceedings?

It is necessary to make a request to the examination division for video-conference oral proceedings. The EPO has a limited number of video-conference suites, and they are also used for internal meetings. Therefore, to increase the likelihood that a request for video-conference oral proceedings will be allowed, the request should be made as early as possible.

The request for video-conference oral proceedings might be made as a precautionary request early in examination proceedings. More typically, however, it might be in the form of a request to change conventional in-person oral proceedings to video-conference oral proceedings.

If the request for video-conference oral proceedings is accepted, the examination division will issue a summons to the oral proceedings (or reissue the summons if the request is for a change from in-person to video-conference oral proceedings). The summons will provide the contact arrangements for the video-conference.

What happens if the request for a video-conference is refused?

Allowance of the request is entirely at the examination division's discretion. There is no possibility to appeal a refusal of a request for a video-conference.

What cases are suitable for a video-conference?

Technical limitations mean that video-conference oral proceedings are most suitable for cases in which there are few issues to discuss and those issues are well-defined. However, this is often the situation in relation to examining division oral proceedings.

What happens if technical problems interrupt the video images?

The oral proceedings will be postponed and another summons to video-conference oral proceedings will be issued by the examining division.

Multi-way video-conference

The request to the examination division can be made for a multi-way video-conference. This can allow a client, applicant or inventor distant from the EPO to participate more easily in the oral proceedings. Indeed, the examining division may agree to start the video-conference oral proceedings at a time which facilitates participation from different time zones. If you want the video-conference to be multi-way, please tell us as early as possible.

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