

Best Practices and Procedures for Video Hearings in Certification Proceedings at the South Carolina Public Service Commission and Heard by a Duly Appointed Hearing Examiner

The South Carolina Public Service Commission (the “Commission”) has recently begun to allow those applicants for a certificate of public convenience and necessity to provide intrastate telecommunications services in South Carolina (“telecom applicants”) to have the public hearing associated with these applications conducted via video conference. In order to streamline the process by which these hearings are held, the following best practices should be followed by those Applicants seeking to conduct a video hearing.

To clarify, at the current time only those hearings that have been referred to a Hearing Examiner by the Commission will be eligible to be conducted via video. As further clarification, no applicant is required to appear via video conference.

Obtaining Permission to Conduct a Video Conference

1. Each applicant seeking to conduct a video hearing must obtain permission from the duly appointed Hearing Examiner in order to do so. Applicants are advised to make any such request well in advance of the scheduled hearing date. Applicants are further advised to discuss their request with the Office of Regulatory Staff and any other parties of record in the Docket prior to making this request to the Hearing Examiner.
2. Upon obtaining the requisite authority, appropriate Information Technology (IT) personnel of the Applicant should contact Douglas Pratt at the Commission to discuss setting up the conference connection or bridge. Mr. Pratt can be reached at (803) 896-0028, or via email at Douglas.Pratt@psc.sc.gov.

Information Regarding the Commission’s Videoconference Equipment

3. The Commission uses a Polycom VSX 7000 configured for Internet Protocol (IP) Connection, and utilizes a bridge service including Video Presenter provided by Applied Global Technologies (AGT). It is possible for the far end of a conference to dial in via Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN). However, the preferred method of connection is IP via the Internet.
4. The Commission Staff has the ability to archive the proceedings and make a digital video file available to the Applicant and other parties.
5. Video Presenter gives the Commission Staff the ability to upload Microsoft Power Point™ presentations and other documents and view them during the conference. *The Applicant should inform Mr. Pratt of any such documents prior to the hearing date.*

6. The Commission Staff would prefer to provide IP addresses, ISDN dial-in numbers and PIN codes as part of the preliminary set up and test procedures described below as opposed to making this information public.

Testing the Connection Prior to Hearing

7. The Applicant should be responsible for contacting the Commission Staff and scheduling a “dry-run” for the video hearing, to take place at least three (3) business days before the scheduled hearing. At that time, the Commission Staff and the Applicant can address any technical challenges that may arise, and ensure that the equipment will operate properly at the scheduled hearing time. *Failure to follow the “3-day test rule” may result in the Hearing Examiner’s reconsideration of a granted motion to hold the hearing by video conference.*