



# OKLAHOMA WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION

1915 N STILES AVE STE 231 · OKC, OK · 73105 · (405) 522-3222 · WCC.OK.GOV

Tulsa office · 212 Kerr State Office Building · 440 South Houston · Tulsa, Oklahoma 74127 · (918) 295-3732

Chairman Mark Liotta · Commissioner Jordan Russell · Commissioner Megan Tilly

Executive Director Hopper Smith

June 30, 2020

## **Amended Interim Guidance for Commission Appellate Proceedings**

On April 24, 2020, Oklahoma began implementing the [Open Up and Recover Safely \(“OURS”\) Plan](#), a three-phased approach to safely reopen Oklahoma’s economy. Based on current scientific modeling, Oklahoma is currently in Phase 3 as of June 1, 2020. In accordance with guidance from the [Oklahoma Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), the Commission will continue in-person appellate proceedings at the Commission’s Oklahoma City office with safety measures still in place and will discontinue virtual appearances via Zoom, subject to limited exceptions for specific health reasons detailed below.

### **Health and Safety Procedures**

In order to protect the health and safety of our employees and those appearing for appellate proceedings, the Commission will continue the following safety procedures:

- Hand sanitizer will be strategically placed in communal spaces and hearing room.
- Hearing room and high-touch surfaces will be sanitized between every proceeding.
- Tissues and no-touch receptacles will be available.
- Appellate hearings will continue to be set at specific times to limit the number of people in the building and in the courtroom at one time.
- In compliance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act and recent cybersecurity guidance from OMES, all appeals hearings will be conducted in-person, and meetings will no longer be conducted virtually via Zoom.\*

### **In-Person Appearance Guidelines**

The Commission asks individuals who appear in-person for appellate proceedings to respect each other and Commission staff by adhering to the following guidelines:

- Please wear a mask or [cloth face covering](#) while inside the Commission building and courtroom.
- Follow [social distancing guidelines](#) by maintaining a physical distance of at least 6 feet from others.
- Avoid congregating in communal areas and minimize face-to-face communication to the extent possible
- Follow CDC guidelines for [hand-washing](#) and follow [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#)
- If an attorney has recently exhibited [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or has recently come into contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, please contact Commission Appellate Counsel at [lindsey.christopher@wcc.ok.gov](mailto:lindsey.christopher@wcc.ok.gov) to make arrangements to continue the case.



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\*The Commission has implemented numerous health and safety procedures to protect and provide accommodations for those who appear in-person for hearings. Until further notice, due to cybersecurity concerns and the agency's commitment to compliance with the Open Meeting Act, the Commission will conduct all appeals in-person at the Commission's Oklahoma City office.

The Commission recognizes that under Phase 3 of the state's OURS plan, state officials still recommend that [high-risk individuals](#), those who are over 65 or part of a vulnerable population, continue to follow safer-at-home policies. If attorneys set to appear before the Commission believe they are high-risk during the COVID-19 pandemic, as defined by the CDC or an Oklahoma public health authority, they may seek accommodation to appear virtually via an approved teleconferencing platform to protect their health.

According to public health authorities, high-risk individuals may include those who are older than 65 and people of any age who have a serious chronic disease, such as asthma and lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, severe obesity, or a weakened immune systems. Please note: this exception should be reserved for the protection of those who are considered high risk and not merely for convenience purposes.

Requests for teleconference accommodation by those who believe they are high risk as defined by public health authorities should be directed to Commission Appellate Counsel at [lindsey.christopher@wcc.ok.gov](mailto:lindsey.christopher@wcc.ok.gov). Due to Open Meeting Act and technology constraints, requests for teleconference accommodation must be sent at least 7 calendar days before the date of oral argument.