



## PUBLIC ADVISORY

### INTERIM GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT OF VIDEOCONFERENCE HEARINGS IN HOUSTON PCG

The Philippine Consulate General in Houston (Houston PCG) wishes to announce that pursuant to applicable Rules and Regulations issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Supreme Court, persons ordered by a Philippine Trial Court to appear before it through videoconference hearings (VCH) may conduct said VCH at the premises of the Consulate General at **9990 Richmond Avenue, Suite 100N, Houston, TX 77042**.

In this regard, the public is advised of the following procedures to set up an appointment for the conduct of a VCH:

#### I. Procedure for the Request

1. Prior to the submission of the motion to the relevant court, the requesting party, **through counsel**, must send a **letter request** addressed to the Philippine Consulate General in Houston and the Office of Treaties and Legal Affairs (OTLA) of the Department of Foreign Affairs via e-mail to [houston.pcg@dfa.gov.ph](mailto:houston.pcg@dfa.gov.ph) and [pcghouston.atn@gmail.com](mailto:pcghouston.atn@gmail.com). The request must indicate the following:
  - i. The nature of the case;
  - ii. The proposed date and time for the conduct of videoconferencing;
  - iii. The name, nationality, and contact details of the person/s to appear before the videoconference hearing;
  - iv. The relevant contact details of the requesting counsel; and
  - v. An undertaking to do the following:
    1. Pay the prescribed fees to Houston PCG for the conduct of VCH;
    2. Comply with the health and security measures being implemented by Houston PCG;
    3. Ensure that all other parties are notified and aware of the arrangements, such as schedule of hearing, time zone differences, and such other relevant matters; and
    4. Provide all necessary equipment, including internet access, and if necessary, interpreters, for the videoconference hearing.
2. Upon receipt of the letter-request, Houston PCG shall comment on the acceptability of the request. Due to differences in time zones, Houston PCG shall only accept requests for VCH conducted during the first business hour of Philippine courts (8:00AM, Philippine Standard Time / 6:00PM Central



Standard Time). Houston PCG shall thereafter communicate its acceptance or denial of the request to the applicant via e-mail, copy furnished OTLA.

3. The applicant may only proceed with the filing of the necessary Motion in Court to issue the Order for videoconferencing after securing the acceptance from Houston PCG on the time and date of the hearing.
4. Upon receiving the Order for Videoconferencing from the Trial Court, the applicant must transmit a copy of the said order to Post.

## II. Duty of the Persons Appearing before the Video Conference Hearing

1. On the scheduled date of the hearing, the applicant must arrive at the Consulate General before 5:00PM Central Standard Time. Only the participants to the VCH will be allowed to enter the Consulate General.
2. The applicant must bring the following during the scheduled date of the hearing:
  - i. The fees payable in **cash** for the conduct of the VCH, in the following amounts:

Service	Amount
Venue (lighting and access only) and administrative fee	\$115.00
Certification	\$40.00; plus \$10.00 per additional copy of the certification

- ii. Self-addressed, self-stamped envelope: Post shall mail the certification for the attendance and the receipt for the amounts paid for the service after three (3) working days.
- iii. Equipment to be used during the VCH, including the device to be used to access the internet.

## III. Duty of the Consulate General

1. The role of the Consulate General is limited to providing the venue for the VCH. The Consulate General will not supply the applicant with any device to be used during the VCH and will not allow the applicant to connect to any network maintained by the Consulate General. **It shall be the applicant's responsibility to supply himself with connection to the internet.**
2. **If requested by the Presiding Judge**, the duty of the Consular Officer attending to the hearing shall be limited only to verifying the identity of the person's appearing before the videoconference hearing through his/her



valid identification document. The Consular Officer may not perform any other act unless with prior written consent of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

3. Issuance of transcript of stenographic notes (TSN) shall be the responsibility of the relevant trial court.

The above guidelines **must be strictly complied with**. Any deviation from the guidelines will be a valid ground to postpone or cancel the conduct of the VCH.

For further inquiry on this matter, Houston PCG may be reached at the following email address: [pcghouston.atn@gmail.com](mailto:pcghouston.atn@gmail.com).

**END**