**What is a Videolink?**

1. A Videolink is an audiovisual link to an external location to allow a person to appear at Court when they cannot attend the County Court in person.
2. The County Court also has the ability to perform audiolinks. Audiolinks are only be performed with leave of a Judge.
3. All videolinks and audiolinks in the County Court are booked through the Videolink Coordinator. The Coordinator can be contacted via telephone on (03) 8636 6530 or via email at videolinks@countycourt.vic.gov.au.

**Preliminary Arrangements**

1. The Court does not have the technology to use Skype for the purpose of audiovisual links. In order to link to a location, the external location must have SIP, IP or ISDN technology.
2. Prior to booking the videolink with the County Court, please book with a compatible external location prior to booking with the County Court Videolink Coordinator. Please keep in mind time differences between states and countries when making bookings.
3. If you need to connect to an external site other than Victorian courts or custody locations within Victoria, you may require an external service provider. The Court does not source external service providers or locations. Please see the list of providers on the County Court Website. All bookings of external service providers, including payment of costs, are the responsibility of the party making that booking. The provider must us the same technology as the Court (either SIP, IP or ISDN).
4. Where an external service provider is not available, an audiovisual link may be conducted using the Cisco Jabber Guest system. This system is an option when traditional audiovisual link technology (SIP, IP or ISDN) is not available. For civil matters, please specify that you wish to use Jabber Guest when seeking leave for the videolink. For criminal matters, the request to use Jabber Guest should be emailed to the List Judge or presiding Judge. See below for the process on seeking leave.
5. Testing must be completed for links to external sites. Please see the ICT Testing Procedures section of this document for the testing process. When booking external sites, it is recommended parties consider time differences between states and countries.

**Leave Process**

1. In some circumstances leave is required to utilise a videolink in the County Court. There are specific leave processes for the Civil and Criminal Jurisdictions.
2. Leave Process for Civil matters:
	1. **Applications before commencement of a hearing:**
		1. By consent - leave sought before the commencement of hearing parties can be obtained through filing consent orders to the Court. Consent orders should be filed with the appropriate registry for the case. Common Law consent orders should be emailed to commonlaw.registry@countycourt.vic.gov.au, Commercial consent orders should be emailed to commercial.registry@countycourt.vic.gov.au.
		2. If consent cannot be obtained, parties are required to make an application to the Court that will be heard in a directions hearing before a judicial registrar or judge for consideration. Please contact the Common Law or Commerical Registries to arrange a directions hearing.
	2. **During a hearing:** parties seek approval from the presiding judge or judicial registrar.
3. Leave Process for Criminal matters:
4. **List Court matters:** Leave is not required for parties to appear from a custodial or other Victorian Court location in the List Courts (General, Sexual Offences and Circuit Lists). Parties should file a completed application form with the videolink Coordinator. If seeking to appear from a location other than a custodial or Victorian Court location, leave should be sought via email from crim.reg@countycourt.vic.gov.au.
5. **Allocated matters:** The Judge with conduct of a matter will consider any request for leave for a party or witness to appear via videolink in matters not listed in the List Court. The party requesting the videolink should seek leave via email to the Judges’ chambers email address.
6. **Unallocated matters:** Leave to appear via videolink for matters not listed in the List Court that have not yet been allocated, is granted by the List Judge. The party requesting the videolink should seek leave via email to listjudge@countycourt.vic.gov.au.

**Lodging of application form, the call setup form and payment of fees**

1. Once leave has been granted, parties must lodge the application their completed application with the Videolink Coordinator to videolinks@countycourt.vic.gov.au. Included in the application form is the Audio Visual Link Call Setup Form. Parties are to include the details of the remote location they have booked in the Audio Visual Link Call Setup Form. The details listed here will be used to perform the link. The last page includes details of the technology used in the County Court, this can assist remote locations in assessing whether their technology is compatible with that of the Court.
2. The completed application form is to be filed at least 3 days before the person the subject of the application is due to appear before or give evidence.

**Fees**

1. Videolinks to any location, other than a custodial or Victorian Court location, incur a booking fee of $82.50. This fee is to be paid via cheque forwarded to the Videolink Coordinator once the application form has been filed. The case number must be included on the back of the cheque or cover letter attached to the payment.
2. Videolinks performed using ISDN technology incur a line fee. If the videolink is to take place using an ISDN, the first hour’s line fee is to be provided alongside the booking fee.

ISDN Line Charges:

Local (Metropolitan) $8.80 per hour

Intrastate (Country Victoria) $89.10 per hour

Interstate (Outside Victoria but within Australia) $122.10 per hour

Outside Australia – International $242.00 per 15 minutes

1. Where the connection exceeds the times mentioned above, additional line fees will be charged on an hourly basis (within Australia) or quarter-hourly basis (International connections). The party or organisation requesting the videolink will receive an invoice for additional line charges.

 **Further information and responsibilities of party requesting video conference**

1. The Court will dial in to the remote location at the appropriate time. The Court does not allow for the external location to dial into the Court. The line charges will therefore be incurred by the Court and those costs will be passed on to the party requesting the videolink.
2. All parties involved in the conference at the remote location are to be in the video conference room at that location at least 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the conference.
3. The party or organisation requesting the video conference is required to notify all conference participants of details of the conference such as venue, commencement time, duration and other relevant requirements or duties.
4. The party or organisation requesting the video conference is to ensure that a bible is available at the remote video conference centre for the swearing-in of witnesses and interpreters if required.
5. The party or organisation requesting the videolink must advise the Videolink Co-ordinator if the matter settles or of any other changes. This party should also notify all conference participants if the link is cancelled.
6. The party or organisation requesting the videolink is responsible for the payment of any charges required to be paid by the operators or agents at the remote location.

**Videolink call setup requirements**

1. As the audiovisual link connection will be from the Court to the remote facility, the party requesting the audiovisual link is responsible for arranging the link at the remote facility and must provide the information required in the attached form entitled audiovisual link call setup form and file this form at the same time as the lodging of the application for a videolink.

Section 42E(2) of the Evidence Act provides;

“A court must not make a direction under sub-section (1) unless it is satisfied that the technical requirements specified in section 42G are met, or can reasonably be met, in the case of the particular link.”

1. The audiovisual link call setup form requires the following information:
	1. Company name (name of organisation where video link is to be made), Country & City, Date, Time, Name of Contact at remote location along with phone number (including mobile phone) & room phone number (i.e. the room where video link is to be held at remote site).
	2. The ISDN Dial in Number or SIP/IP address is required to enable the Court to dial the remote video-conferencing unit obtainable from the remote site.

**ICT Testing Procedures**

1. If a videolink requires testing, the Videolink Coordinator will refer the link to In Court Technology (ICT), who perform videolink tests for County Court matters.
2. ICT will liaise with the applicant to arrange a suitable time to conduct a test call. ICT will often provide two proposed times to conduct a test call. The applicant should contact the external site provider to ensure a test can be conducted prior to the Court hearing.
3. ICT requires:
4. a minimum of 24 working hours notice for local and interstate video conference calls.
5. a minimum of 48 working hours notice for international video conference calls.
6. If no test has been held, the Court and ICT are not responsible for any issues arising due to audio and video quality.

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| **Contact and Technical Information** |
| Contact | Videolink Coordinator |
| Phone Number | (03) 8636 6530 |
| Fax Number | (03) 8636 6051 |
| Email |  videolinks@countycourt.vic.gov.au |
| Codec Manufacturer | Tandberg |
| Codec Model | **Tandberg 2500** |
| Transmission Rate/s | 56 - 384K |
| Transmission Algorithm | Standards H.320 (ISDN) and H.323 (TCP/IP) |
| *Technology Support to County Court* | *In Court Technology Group – (03) 9603 2410* |