



# San Francisco Residential Rent Stabilization and Arbitration Board Temporary Remote Hearing Procedures Due to COVID-19

## PLEASE CAREFULLY READ AND BE FAMILIAR WITH THESE PROCEDURES BEFORE YOUR UPCOMING HEARING DATE.

Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Rent Board's office is currently closed to the public and hearings are temporarily being conducted through remote conferencing. To ensure that your hearing runs smoothly, all participants are required to follow these procedures:

**I. PROGRAM USED:** The Rent Board is using Microsoft Teams to conduct hearings remotely.

**II. TECHNOLOGY NEEDED:** Participants may appear for the hearing by video (preferred) or phone via a computer, tablet, or phone. If you do not have any of this equipment available to you, please contact Rent Board staff at 415-252-4600 or by emailing us at [rentboard@sfgov.org](mailto:rentboard@sfgov.org) *immediately*.

**III. TO APPEAR BY VIDEO:** A desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet, or smartphone may be used to appear by video conference using Microsoft Teams. Your device must have a microphone, front-facing camera, and a stable internet connection. If not already provided, the parties should provide the Rent Board (preferably by email at [rentboard@sfgov.org](mailto:rentboard@sfgov.org)) with their email address and the email address for each participant who wishes to appear by video conference as soon as possible (**preferably, at least 5 business days prior to the hearing**). Participants may include parties, attorneys, authorized representatives, witnesses, or interpreters. Your email should include your name, your hearing date, and the case number. The Rent Board will send an invitation to appear for the remote hearing by video conference to only those participants for whom we have an email address.

**IV. TO APPEAR BY PHONE:** At the time of the scheduled hearing, each participant who wishes to appear by phone must call the "Meeting Phone Number" shown on the attached Notice of Hearing and enter the "Conference ID#" shown below the Meeting Phone Number. No other equipment besides a telephone is needed to appear at the remote hearing by voice alone.

## V. HOW TO ACCESS MICROSOFT TEAMS (FOR VIDEO PARTICIPANTS ONLY)

1. An email will be sent to you (if provided) within 3-7 days of the hearing date that invites you to join the meeting and contains the following weblink:

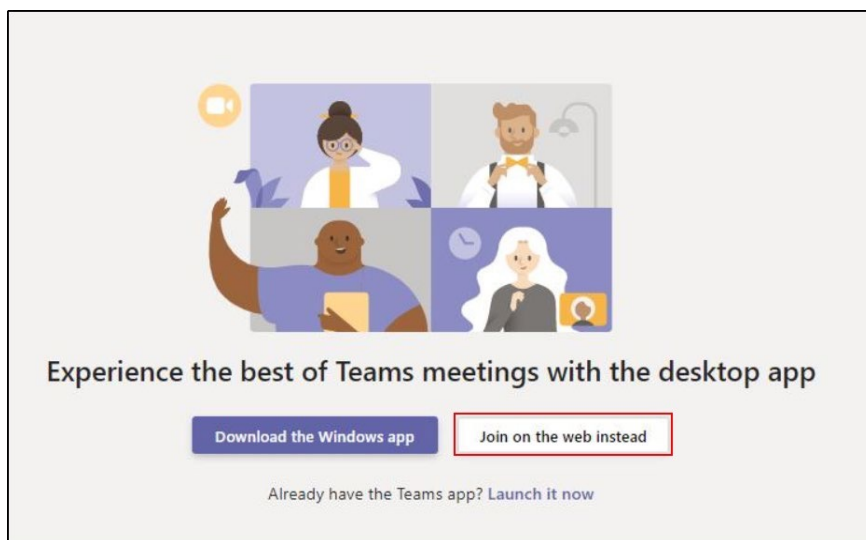
[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

[Learn more about Teams](#) | [Meeting options](#)



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2. Click on “[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)” to join the remote hearing at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time of the hearing. Participants will be placed on hold until Rent Board staff initiates the hearing.
3. If you already have the Microsoft Teams application installed on your device, the program will auto-launch and direct you to the remote hearing. **When prompted, make sure to allow the application to use the microphone and camera on your device.**
4. If you do not have the Microsoft Teams application on your device, the following screen will appear:



5. If you have the Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge web browser, the hearing can be accessed without downloading the Microsoft Teams app by clicking the button that reads “[Join on the web instead](#)”. Note that if you are using a different web browser (such as Safari or Firefox), you **WILL NOT BE ABLE TO USE THE WEB OPTION AND MUST DOWNLOAD THE MICROSOFT TEAMS APP.**
6. The Microsoft Teams app can be downloaded from the Microsoft website (for computers) or App Store (for smart phones or tablets) for free by clicking the “Download the Windows [or Mac] app” button.
7. All participants who have received the email invitation from the Rent Board and intend to appear by video conference should confirm the Microsoft Teams app is installed on their device or that they can appear via the web using the Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge web browser prior to the commencement of the hearing.



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## VI. PREPARING FOR THE HEARING (ALL PARTICIPANTS)

1. If you are using a mobile device to appear at the hearing, please make sure it is sufficiently charged prior to the hearing.
2. Make a list of dates or a chronology of events before the hearing begins to avoid trying to remember dates or information at the hearing. Gather all relevant information and have it ready prior to the hearing.
3. All supporting documents and evidence that is relevant to your case should be submitted as soon as possible before your hearing date (preferably by email to [rentboard@sfgov.org](mailto:rentboard@sfgov.org)), with a copy sent to the opposing party (also by email, if known). Evidence may include photographs, written notices, letters, official citations/notices, leases, etc. Pages of documents should be numbered so they can be referenced during the hearing.
4. Note that all documents filed with the Rent Board are public record. For your protection, please redact any sensitive personal information such as Social Security Number, financial account number, driver's license number or health/medical information from your email or other documents.

## VII. PROCEDURES DURING THE HEARING (ALL PARTICIPANTS)

1. At the beginning of the remote hearing, the Administrative Law Judge will introduce the case and instruct all participants when to announce themselves for purposes of the record.
2. During the hearing, all parties will have an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and argument, and to call and cross-examine witnesses.
3. Formal rules of evidence do not apply at Rent Board hearings. However, all evidence and testimony must be *relevant* to the issues raised in the petition. Due to the limited amount of hearing time, testimony should be to the point and as brief as possible.
4. The Rent Board recording is the only official record of the proceeding and participants **MAY NOT** use any personal device to capture any video images or record any portion of the proceeding.
5. All participants are required to identify anyone that may be observing the proceedings with them. This is essential to ensure the credibility of testimony.

## VIII. FOR MORE INFORMATION

We recognize that these are new procedures and challenging times for everyone. We are here to help and to do our best to make sure your case is timely decided. Please do not hesitate to contact the Rent Board's counseling line at 415-252-4600 in advance of your hearing.