



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

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

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

I. PROGRAM USED: The Rent Board is using Microsoft Teams for remote conferencing (hearings and mediations).

II. TECHNOLOGY NEEDED: Participants may appear for the remote conference 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 *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) 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 scheduled date**). Your email should include your name, phone number, and the case number (or property address). The Rent Board will send an invitation to appear 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 remote conference, each participant who wishes to appear by phone must call the "Meeting Phone Number" shown on the attached Notice and enter the "Conference ID#" shown below the Meeting Phone Number. No other equipment besides a telephone is needed to appear at the remote conference 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 remote conference date that invites you to join the meeting and contains the following weblink:

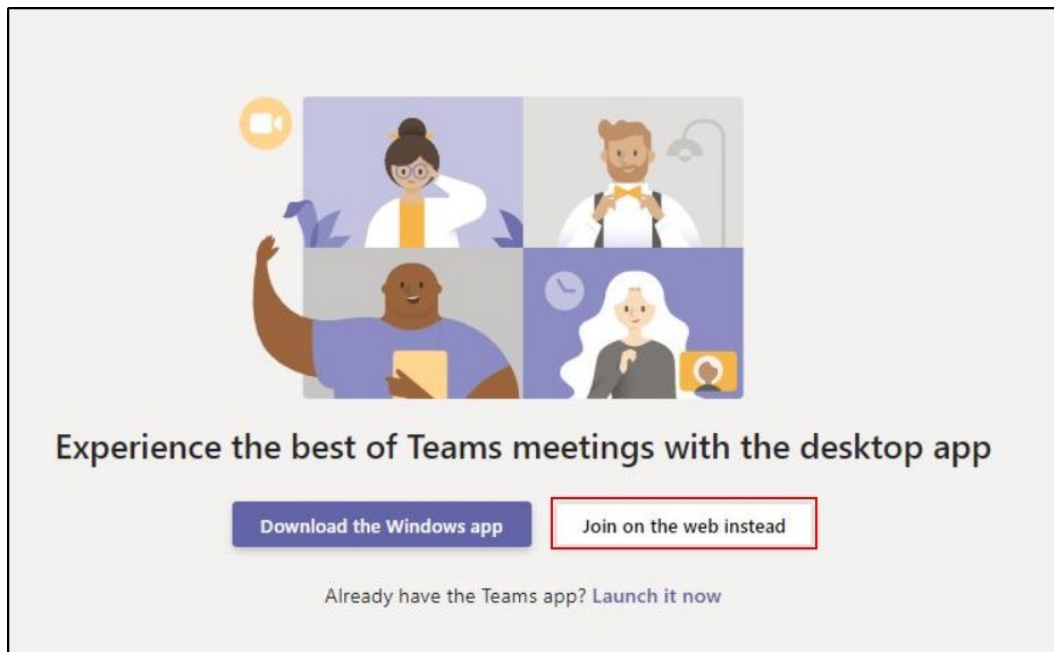
[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

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



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2. Click on “[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)” to join the remote conference at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time. Participants will be placed on hold until Rent Board staff initiates the conference.
3. If you already have the Microsoft Teams application installed on your device, the program will auto-launch and direct you to the remote conference. **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 conference 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* 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 remote conference.



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VI. PREPARING FOR THE REMOTE CONFERENCE (ALL PARTICIPANTS)

1. If you are using a mobile device to appear at the remote conference, please make sure it is sufficiently charged prior to the start time.
2. Make a list of dates or a chronology of events before the remote conference begins to avoid trying to remember dates or information. Gather all relevant information and have it ready prior to the remote conference date.
3. All supporting documents and evidence that is relevant to your case should be submitted as soon as possible before your remote conference date (preferably by email to 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 conference.
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 FOR MEDIATIONS CONDUCTED BY REMOTE CONFERENCE (ALL PARTICIPANTS)

1. Mediation offers the parties the opportunity to resolve their differences in a less adversarial setting than an arbitration hearing. In mediation, the participants reach their own agreement, with the assistance of a neutral, independent Rent Board mediator. The agreement must be mutually acceptable to both participants, and it is legally binding and enforceable in a court of law.
2. The mediation process will allow each participant to discuss his or her concerns. You should be prepared to make some brief opening remarks about the subject of the petition. You should also come prepared to negotiate and discuss the matters set out in the petition.
3. Please do not interrupt other speakers during the mediation or allow other noise disturbances.
4. All participants are required to identify anyone that may be observing the mediation with them. This is essential to ensure the confidentiality of the proceedings.

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 conference date.