



कर्मचारी भविष्य निधि संगठन  
(श्रम एवं रोजगार मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)  
**EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION**  
(Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India)

मुख्य कार्यालय / Head Office  
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WEB CIRCULATION

No. C-I/3(28)2016/7A & 14B/1161

Date: 01.10.2020

To,

All Addl. CPFCs in charge of Zones  
All Regional P F Commissioners in charge of RO

**Sub: Conduct of virtual hearing in quasi-judicial cases by Assessing Officers through Video conferencing by use of secure IT applications.**

Sir,

You are aware that the aforesaid system of conduct of virtual hearing in quasi-judicial cases under the EPF & MP Act, 1952 through Video conferencing was launched by the Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C), MoL & E, Govt. of India and Chairman, CBT, EPF on 09.09.2020.

The objective of the system is to:

- Enable Adjudicating Officers (AO) to discharge their quasi-judicial duty to hear parties for adjudicating the issues under inquiry
- Enable Parties to make submissions, present their case & file documents from remote location of their convenience instead of physical appearance before the AO at EPFO Office.
- Integration of Virtual hearings with e-Court process on Compliance e-Proceedings Portal.

In this connection, following instructions & guidelines are issued for compliance by all concerned Assessing Officers, Enforcement Officers/Department Representatives and for strict implementation by RPFCs and Zonal ACCs:

Henceforth, hearings in all inquiry cases u/s 7A & section 14B, including cases remanded by higher judicial forums for fresh adjudication are to be held in Virtual mode only.

I. It should be ensured that

- Registered email id & Mobile number of employer is available is available in Form 5A or (DSC)/e-Sign or Establishment Master for direct e-communication to employer. Once the User ID or Login on Unified Portal is integrated with Compliance e-Proceedings Portal, the e-communication shall be through the Employer's Login. Contact details- email id & Mobile number of other parties to dispute need to be obtained for communication and sending link for Virtual hearing.

The IS Division shall be deploying message in Login of employers for confirmation of their Email Id so as to avoid sending message to any incorrect Email Id

- Each Assessing Officer to have a dedicated official e-mail id (@epfindia.gov.in) for communication with employers and other parties in r/o 7A & 14B cases.
- The ZO/RO to identify and select any secure Video Conferencing Application/Utility for virtual hearings
- Inquiry Proceeding is to be conducted on Compliance e-Proceedings Portal (herein after referred to as the Portal) so as to have a computerized case diary and status of the case and orders passed are accessible to parties on the Portal.
- After seeding and filing Summon No., EO's Inspection Report in the Portal, the Diary Number of the case is generated and the inquiry formally gets commenced.
- The Case Diary ID no. shall be quoted on all the communications- notice for hearing, daily order sheets, final orders, orders and notices in execution process.
- Sufficient evidence is available on record for assessment of dues.

- h. Inspection Report of EO is filed or prepared/available & can be filed

The Assessing Officers shall ensure service of e-Notice containing details of Virtual hearing and conduct the hearings as per guidelines mentioned below:

## **II. Content and service of e-Notice:**

**Service:** Till time the User ID or Login on Unified Portal is integrated with Compliance e-Proceedings Portal, e-Notice intimating the date, time & mode of the hearing is to be served on Employer through email ID disclosed in Form 5A or (DSC)/e-Sign or Establishment Master and through SMS/WA to Mobile number informed in Form 5A or in DSC/e-Sign and to other parties, if any, through e-mail id and SMS on mobile number. The Case ID number of Compliance e-Proceedings should invariably be quoted in all notices for hearings.

### **Content of Notice:**

- a. Virtual Mode of hearing specifying the date and time and Meeting link to employer & others to join the hearing at scheduled time.
- b. Use of any video conferencing Utility compatible with desktop/laptop/Cell phone.
- c. Quick user guide to participate in Video hearing using meeting link.
- d. URL of Compliance e-Proceedings Portal to enable employer to know case status including next date of hearing & daily orders --  
<https://eproceedings.epfindia.gov.in/epfo/public/caseenowisearch.php>
- e. Liberty to Employer/other parties to furnish from their registered email id authorisation letter in favour of their representative for hearing

## **III. Participation of AO, DR & others**

1. Assessing Officer (AO) shall conduct virtual Court from desktop in his office chamber.
2. EO (Dept. Representative) to attend hearings in 7A cases through Desktop available in Office. In 14B cases, the SS/DA of the Section shall attend the hearings through desktop available in Office.
3. Compliance Section SS/SSA- custodian of the file & records & role of filer in the Compliance e-Proceedings Portal shall join the virtual hearing through link from Desktop in Section/Office for carrying out following roles:
  - To scan and upload physical documents delivered by any party.
  - To type out proceedings, take print out, upload daily or final order on Portal after signature of AO
  - To update status in each case on Portal & follow calendar
  - Issue of notice of hearings, adjournments and orders to parties through e-mail

## **IV. Conduct of Hearings**

1. On the date of the hearing, the hyperlink of Video Conferencing provided in e-Notice would enable the parties to participate in the proceedings remotely. Office of the AO to verify whether authorization letter is received from employer's registered email id /other parties in favour of the persons appearing in the virtual hearing.
2. AO to satisfy himself/herself that all the parties participating from remote points can be seen and heard clearly and that each of the parties at their point can clearly see and hear the AO and other parties. AO should have a clear image of each party.
3. Proceedings to be drawn on the spot in presence of the participating parties in the Portal directly using the screen share mode of the VC utilities.
4. Oral submissions made, including admission of liability by employer or consent of complainant to the assessment of dues & arguments put forth by parties during video conferencing should be recorded by AO in daily order sheet.
5. The daily order sheet with signature of the Assessing Officer is to be sent by email to the parties for resubmission by each party through e-mail in PDF format bearing signature or digital signature or e-sign of the employer/complainant or their authorized representatives who appeared in the hearing.

6. **Filing of documents:** If employer needs to file documents/papers/statement in support of his case or to contest the case of EPFO, the same be allowed to be filed by employer from their registered e-mail id to a dedicated e-mail id of AO's Office. The other parties can also file documents in support of their case through their email id. The documents in PDF format bearing signature or signed digitally by the person authenticating the documents/records shall be admitted. The document/statement so filed can be uploaded by SS/DA on the Portal once such facility is enabled. If any employer or any other party to dispute insists on filing submission or document in hard copy through post or by delivery at office of AO, the same may be allowed which can be scanned and uploaded by SS/DA Filer on Portal.
7. AO to specifically record in the daily order sheet as to the admission of a document as evidence and take it on record by assigning a marking to it for identification.
8. As the next date and time of the hearing is mentioned in the Daily Order Sheet, no separate adjournment notice is issued to the establishment. The AO is to make use of Calendar feature, if any, available in the VC Utility to triggers email to all the participants regarding next date & time of hearing
9. The audio visual Virtual hearing shall be recorded either in desktop or cloud by the licensed host (O/o AO, EPFO).
10. On conclusion of hearings, AO should fix a date preferably within 7 days for pronouncement of orders on which day the final order should be uploaded on Compliance e-Portal.

The RPFC-I in charge of RO and Zonal Addl. CPFCs are required to steer the implementation in a smooth manner and ensure that hearings of inquiries are taken up through video conferencing through secure IT applications duly using the features available & enabled on Compliance e-Proceedings Portal. The RPFCs and ACCs shall continue to be responsible for review of pending cases and quality & content of final orders issued on monthly basis.

Please note that development process is underway to integrate Employer's Login credentials on the Unified Portal and EO's credentials on SSP with the Portal for login, service of e-notice & Inspection report on the employer & filing of documents by employer and EO with e-sign/ digital signature & to enable filer role of SS/DA in the Portal till conclusion of case. Further guidelines shall be issued after development.

Any query or feedback regarding above may be sent to email address: [virtual.hearing@epfindia.gov.in](mailto:virtual.hearing@epfindia.gov.in).

(This issues with the approval of the Central P F Commissioner)

Yours faithfully,

  
(Pankaj Raman)

Addl. CPFC (Compliance) 11/10/2020

Copy for information

1. PS to CPFC
2. FA & CAO
3. All Addl. CPFCs (Hqrs.) at EPFO, HO
4. CVO, Vigilance Headquarters, EPFO
5. Director, PDNASS
6. All Addl. CPFCs at EPFO, HO