

Operational guidelines: System setup checklist

Background information

Vulnerable persons (children and people with a cognitive impairment), complainants in prescribed sexual offence proceedings and sexual offence witnesses are entitled to give their evidence from a place other than the courtroom by means of closed circuit television facilities or other technology that enables communication between that place and the courtroom, if they choose to do so. For the purposes of these guidelines, that place is referred to as the remote witness room.

The witness is also entitled to have a support person with them in the remote witness room, sitting near or in sight of them.

The remote witness room is considered to be part of the court. For the safety of witnesses their location is confidential.

Procedures

The following information is provided to assist the Sheriff's/Court Officer responsible for the set-up and operation of the remote witness facilities. The PC controls the in-court audio and video.

1. In the remote witness room, select the court to connect to, for example District Court/Local Court/Court 1 etc). This must be done first to allow the court to connect to the remote witness room.
2. In the courtroom select REMOTE WITNESS on the PC screen. This will bring up a list of available remote witness rooms. This should be green in color indicating the remote witness room is available. If it is grey, then remote witness room is either in use by another court or the court has not been selected in the remote witness room.
3. Select CONNECT on the PC to connect to the room.

Check of camera views

To check the system, one officer will have to be in court and the other officer in the remote witness room.

1. Check the witness head/shoulders view displays the head/shoulders of a person sitting at the witness table, on the large courtroom monitor and the Bench monitor.
2. Check to ensure that the image in the remote witness room displays an image of the Bench and Bar table as a split image.
3. Find the place at the bar table that gives the witness the best view of the legal representative, and place a mark on the table at that place and/or inform the legal representative of where they need to stand in order to be seen clearly.
4. Ensure that the camera is positioned so the accused cannot be seen by the witness. This may require particular attention if the accused person is permitted by the court to sit behind their legal representative or where they are unrepresented.
5. If Witness Testimony Recording (WTR) is required, check to make sure the image of the remote witness appears in all four (4) quadrants of the recording.
6. Check that the judicial officer's close up image view displays the full close up image of the judicial officer, on the right hand witness console monitor.
7. Note: A full remote witness room view is no longer available in remote witness facilities installed after 2005.

Transmission check to and from the courtroom and remote witness room

1. Stand in front of the centre bar table microphone. Test that the volume is getting to the remote witness room with the assistance of the other Sheriff's/Court Officer in the remote witness room (this is done by viewing the screen and talking to the person).
2. Check that the judicial officer's microphone is working in the same manner as above.
3. Check that the video/audio SYSTEM MUTE mutes all video and audio to the remote witness room.
4. Check that the video/audio WITNESS MUTE mutes the audio and video from the remote witness room to the court.
5. Check that the AUDIO MUTE mutes all audio ONLY to and from the remote witness room.
6. Use the electronic document viewer or the DVD player to check that the split image of the court appears on one monitor in the remote witness room and the other monitor in the remote witness room shows the "evidence".
7. Check that the recording equipment is working and is switched on at commencement of the witness giving evidence in all relevant matters.

Notes

1. The Bench or Sheriff's/Court Officer via the PC are able to view any electronic evidence and the remote witness at the same time with the evidence appearing as a small picture inserted in the larger remote witness image. This can be reversed by the Sheriff's/Court Officer or the Bench via the EVIDENCE TOGGLE button/icon.
2. Every remote witness room should have phone/intercom connection with the court and this connection should be checked prior to the witness giving evidence.

Last update: December 2013