



Alberta Court of Justice

Central Region

Red Deer Family Court

Virtual Judicial Dispute Resolution (VJDR) Protocol

Effective: April 1, 2023

Purpose:

This Protocol applies to Judicial Dispute Resolutions (JDRs) that have been previously booked or will be booked. If a party does not have access to Zoom or other video conferencing software, then the JDR shall be conducted by telephone or, if directed by the Court, in person.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE PROVISIONS ON PAGE 3 OF THIS PROTOCOL RELATING TO FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE PROTOCOL.

Procedures/Guidelines:

1. Until further notice, all JDRs shall be conducted virtually, either by Zoom or other video conferencing software should it become available, unless exceptional circumstances exist that require an in-person JDR.
2. All participants must have upgraded to Zoom 5.0, or the most recent upgrade, as this software is required for the VJDR to occur.
3. All parties and counsel are reminded that even though the VJDR is being conducted remotely, it is still a court proceeding. As a result, parties are to be polite and respectful. Failure to comply with this will result in the Justice either muting the offending party or canceling the VJDR. Parties are also reminded that VJDRs are confidential and other individuals, including children they may be caring for, are not to be present during the VJDR. Only the parties and their counsel may attend.
4. Should the parties elect or are directed to a Binding VJDR, they are to complete a Binding JDR Agreement and file it with the Court prior to the VJDR date being set.

5. When the VJDR date is set, parties shall advise the Court of their email address and telephone number in the courtroom at the time of booking.
6. Parties are to be available at least 5 minutes before the VJDR is scheduled to begin.

The VJDR Process:

1. Within 5 days of the VJDR being scheduled, a copy of this protocol and a link will be emailed to the parties inviting them to attend a Zoom meeting at the date and time scheduled for the VJDR.
2. Parties are to accept the VJDR meeting invitation as soon as possible after they receive it.
3. Counsel shall forward the meeting link together with a copy of this protocol to their clients as soon as possible after they receive it.
4. All parties shall have their video turned on unless otherwise permitted by the VJDR Justice.
5. Recording or taking screenshots of the VJDR is prohibited.
6. Non-alcoholic refreshments are permitted during the VJDR. Food or gum is not permitted during the VJDR.
7. Focus should be on courteous, productive resolution.
8. **By 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Wednesday prior to the scheduled VJDR (unless waived by the Justice)**, each party shall provide a brief summary outlining what type of order they are seeking, what is working and what is not working in their matter. The summary shall not exceed 2 pages. Counsel are encouraged to prepare a draft order and attach it to their summary (any draft order is not included in the 2 page restriction). **These summaries are to be sent by email to: family.reddeer@csadm.just.gov.ab.ca. Each party shall exchange their summary with all other parties, including the lawyers.**

Failure to Strictly Comply with this Protocol:

1. Should a party not attend a VJDR, the matter will be automatically adjourned to the next available date in Courtroom 103.

2. **Failure to provide the summaries by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Wednesday prior to the scheduled VJDR will result in the automatic cancellation of the VJDR and the matter will be returned to the scheduled docket date or, if no docket date is scheduled, the matter will be adjourned to the next available date in Courtroom 103.**
3. Parties who have failed to comply with this Protocol will not be entitled to book another VJDR until all summaries have been provided.
4. Costs may be awarded against the party or parties who did not comply with this Protocol.
5. The Court may make any other order it deems appropriate.