

## LawToolBox Automates Breakout Rooms for Microsoft Teams to Facilitate Virtual Court Hearings

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DENVER (May 27, 2020) – LawToolBox announces a new feature that automates “breakout rooms” for Microsoft Teams, enhancing virtual meetings for Teams specifically for court hearings and depositions. As courts and litigants adjust to the Coronavirus pandemic, the new reality is setting in that there has already been an irreversible shift to conduct much of the courts business virtually.

Microsoft Teams delivers high-quality video conferencing and lets everyone in the proceeding see and discuss documents and exhibits clearly, easily and securely. Microsoft has rolled-out [new features](#) that will improve virtual hearings in Microsoft Teams including: (1) nine panel 3x3 camera view of web conference, (2) ability to raise hand to get court and counsel attention without interrupting proceedings, and (3) custom backgrounds. And because Microsoft stores client data in a local datacenter, even courts in the government cloud with strict oversight and security policies can safely manage hearings.

However, Teams out-of-the-box has been missing one-click break-out rooms. With its new release, LawToolBox has automated the creation and configuration of the [hearings with breakout rooms](#) for sidebars with the court, attorneys and pro se parties; as well as breakout rooms for confidential and secure meetings between attorneys and their clients:

- **MAIN EVENT – HEARING.** While court personnel can be automatically admitted to proceedings, external user like attorneys, parties and witnesses will sit in a waiting room until admitted to the proceeding by the court clerk. This proceeding can be recorded by the clerk and transcribed by Teams, but the recording will only be available to the court after the hearing is over. The clerk has full control to remove anyone from the main hearing at any time (for example a witness who is done testifying).
- **SIDEBARS.** The clerk of the court will mute all the attendees in the main event and share the clerk’s screen with a message that reads “The court proceeding will continue shortly”, and then start the sidebar meeting and admit the judges, counsel and pro se parties from a waiting room into the sidebar breakout room. Just like with the main proceeding, external users cannot chat or control the meeting.
- **CONFIDENTIAL CLIENT MEETINGS.** The clerk of the court will mute all the attendees in the main event and share their screen with a message that reads “The court proceeding will continue shortly”, and then start the “Confidential Client Meeting” admit the counsel and their client from a waiting room into the private breakout room, and then the clerk

will leave the meeting but the attorney and client will be able to talk in private.

- **EXHIBITS.** Even though attorneys and pro se parties will submit legal papers and exhibits in advance of the proceeding, often there are last minute pieces of evidence that need to be submitted the night before or during a hearing. The clerk of the court can include a link to a SharePoint folder in the main hearing invite or any breakout room as needed that will allow attorneys, parties, or witnesses to upload and share last-minute files.

Enabling these breakout rooms all within Teams ensures that microphones in the main event are muted during sidebars and confidential meetings, and that the proceedings can run smoothly with minimal interruptions. Further streamlining and simplifying any hearing, after a court sets up a breakout room it can later re-use that meeting for the same attendees in all subsequent proceedings in that case. During the hearing the clerk can use LawToolBox to email any attendee in case having difficulty finding the right meeting.

LawToolBox has been building to Microsoft Teams since before Teams was formally launched, and beyond automating breakout rooms for Teams LawToolBox augments Teams with many [other tools](#) for managing court proceedings including:

- assigning hearings to matters
- delivering robust reports
- integrating calendaring in Outlook
- rules-based deadlines
- streamlining file-sharing in SharePoint
- daily onboarding webinars
- linking to case management.

When combining Microsoft Teams and LawToolBox ... courts, agencies and legal departments have all the tools they need to manage virtual proceedings securely and efficiently, and they can accelerate the buying process because LawToolBox can be added to their monthly Microsoft invoice-for \$19 per user for 20 to 80 licenses (volume discounts apply for 80+).

“When you combine the native features of Microsoft Teams with LawToolBox, not only do you get a great LawToolBox dashboard for all the data and tools courts, agencies and attorneys need, but now you get a tool to easily and simply configure and manage breakout meetings” says Carol Lynn Grow, Chief Operating Officer at LawToolBox. By automating breakout rooms for Teams, LawToolBox further solidifies its place as a critical component of a complete virtual hearing solution in Microsoft Teams.

Contact:

Carol Lynn Grow, COO  
LawToolBox.com, Inc.  
clg@lawtoolbox.com  
303-759-3572