

FINRA Announces Resumption of In-Person Arbitration Hearings

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The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) Dispute Resolution Services has announced it will reopen the majority of its 69 hearing locations across the United States and Puerto Rico for in-person arbitration and mediation proceedings beginning July 5, 2021.

July 30 Reopening at Certain Locations

In-person proceedings will be postponed in the following seven locations through July 30, 2021:

- Augusta, Georgia
- Boca Raton, Florida
- Buffalo, New York
- Detroit, Michigan
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Providence, Rhode Island
- Wilmington, Delaware

FINRA has advised that parties with cases set for an in-person hearing or mediation session scheduled through July 30 in these locations will be contacted by FINRA Dispute Resolution staff to discuss virtual hearing options or to reschedule the hearing. Postponing such a hearing will not affect other case deadlines, which will continue to apply unless the parties agree otherwise.

Protocols

FINRA is implementing safety protocols for in-person hearings, including the following:

- Hearings will be held in venues large enough to allow social distancing;
- Cleaning and sanitizing stations will be provided;
- Masks will be required for all participants and arrangements will be made to provide masks to participants who do not have them;
- Separate break out rooms will be provided for each party and their counsel, as well as the arbitrators, so each group can meet privately and maintain social distancing;
- Plexiglass dividers or face shields will be provided in the event testifying witnesses must remove their masks;
- Participants will be required to complete a written health questionnaire certifying they have not tested positive for COVID-19, do not have symptoms related to COVID-19, and, to the best of their knowledge, they have not been exposed to someone who has tested positive for or shown any symptoms of COVID-19 within the two weeks preceding the hearing; and
- Participants will be provided information on best practices for traveling and staying in hotels under the current circumstances.

FINRA is a government-authorized not-for-profit organization that oversee U.S. securities broker-dealers. FINRA Dispute Resolution Services provides an arbitration forum for resolution of disputes between or among FINRA member firms, certain of their employees, and their customers.

Jackson Lewis attorneys regularly represent financial services employers in FINRA arbitration hearings and provide advice and counsel to employers subject to regulatory oversight by FINRA. Please contact the Jackson Lewis attorney with whom you regularly work if you have questions or need assistance.

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