



Setup Guide

**Setting up your Virtual Courtroom
& Guest Witness Stand**

Empire One Setup Guide



Introduction

Setting up your Virtual Courtroom (VC) is the key to your Empire Online experience. By following our simple instructions, a desk can become a bench, a table turns into a counsel table and a classroom morphs into your well. What's more, by using the webcams we provide, we'll ensure that judges get an up close and personal view of your team's performance, which will mimic what they'd see if we met in person.

The below instructions are based on our formal VC requirements, which are codified in the Rules of Procedure. All instructions are regulations (i.e. a requirement) unless noted otherwise. If you have a question whether an instruction is a recommendation or requirement, please feel free to ask.

Just like we provide you with a courtroom to use at an in-person Empire competition, we are, in some ways, providing you with a virtual courtroom (with lots of your help, of course!). While some rules may seem overly specific (e.g. don't cross the X on the ground at the 4' mark), please know that every decision we made was after extensive testing and with your best interests in mind.

Our objective is to ensure high quality trials that are fundamentally fair for all of you. To do that, we're helping you create the best space possible to display your talents to your judges. Just as important, we want a judge's focus to be on the quality of your performance, not the quality of your webcam or your ability to set up a courtroom that appears perfectly on Zoom. At the core of our efforts is a desire to create an authentic courtroom experience (given the circumstances) and to equalize the playing field for all.

Like always, we are here to support you throughout this process.

Adapting for COVID-19

The Empire One Setup Guide provides teams with two possible ways to set up their VC, which we designate Option A and Option B: Option A does not prioritize social distancing. It was designed earlier this year with the hope that the number of COVID-19 cases would be significantly reduced or eliminated by the fall. While we leave the ultimate setup decision up to you, we cannot, in good conscience, recommend Option A at this time.

Option B, however, accounts for proper spacing between attorneys and witnesses, and encourages the use of two counsel tables. You should consult your locality's COVID-19 guidelines prior to setting up your VC.

Regardless of setup, we highly recommend that all participants wear masks during the trial. Our judges will be instructed that Empire is making this recommendation to teams, consistent with public health guidelines.

Virtual Courtroom Assets

Creating your VC will take some work on your part and ours. Here's how we'll make it happen:

Empire

We are responsible for providing:

- Widescreen webcam
- Standard webcam
- Gaffer tape
- Tape measure

Your Team

You are responsible for providing:

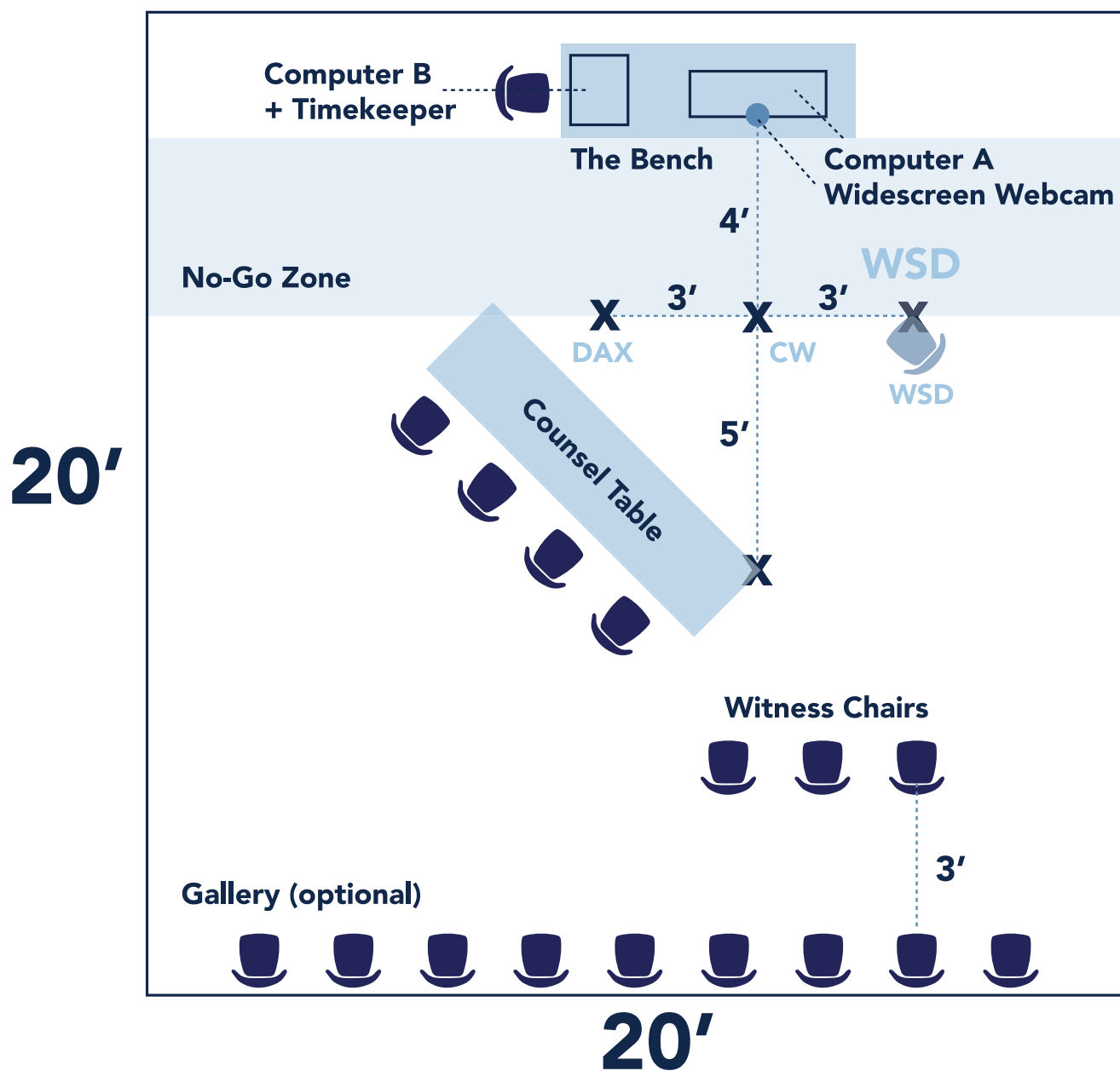
- (3X) laptops or desktops that meet [Zoom's minimum system requirements](#), which includes an approved operating system, web browser, acceptable processor, and RAM
 - The Zoom app should be downloaded on each computer
 - You may not use a mobile device or tablet
- Wired or wireless internet access that meets Zoom's [minimum bandwidth requirements](#)
 - While we will support teams who struggle to meet these requirements, there is only so much we can do from afar—we expect teams to work with their IT department to secure an adequate internet connection
- Two rooms
 - Virtual Courtroom
 - Room Size
 - Should be at least 20' x 20' (Option A) or 24' x 24' (Option B)
 - This refers to the size of the area in which you are presenting. If you wish to create a space on the "other side of the bar" for spectators, you may do so; but you'll need a larger room.
 - Computers
 - Computer A: Primary device that connects to widescreen webcam and displays trial
 - Computer B: Operated by timekeeper - no video permitted
 - Guest Witness Room: no size requirement
 - Computer C: Guest Witness stand, not located in your VC
- Counsel table(s)
 - Option A: One table, 6' - 10' long
 - Option B: Two tables, 6' - 10' long

- 3-5 chairs
- Feel free to use 2-4 desks positioned side-by-side
- Judge's bench / timekeeper station
 - Recommended desk or table size of 4' - 6'
 - One chair
 - Your main computer, Computer A, connected to the widescreen Empire webcam
 - Webcam must be positioned ~4' from the ground
 - Your timekeeper will operate Computer B, which will display evidence and allow the timekeeper to corroborate their time w/ their fellow timekeeper
- (3X) Witness Chairs
- (1X) Witness Stand

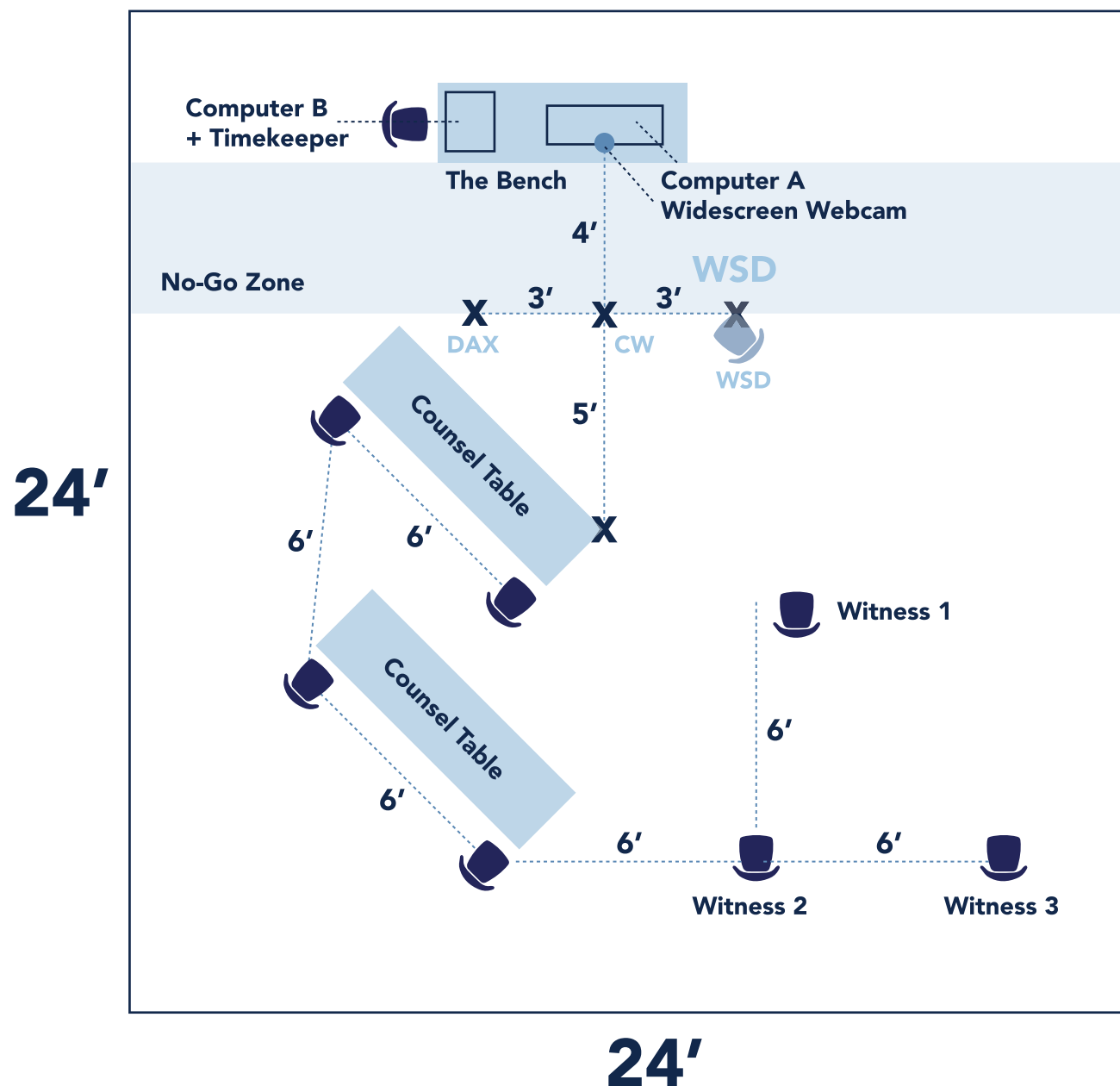
Your team MAY provide:

- Spectator Chairs
 - We encourage spectators to set up at least 3' behind the competing witnesses to watch the trial
 - Note: This is an Empire competition, so all communication rules are in place
- Computer monitor or projector screen to view the trial
 - Note: We don't regulate what you see (i.e. how you watch or listen to the trial), only what the judges see and perceive. We highly recommend setting up a large monitor to view the trial. However, if your audio setup causes feedback during our testing, we will work with you to remedy that issue prior to the competition

Virtual Courtroom Layout Option A



Virtual Courtroom Layout Option B



10 Steps for Creating your Virtual Courtroom



Whether you select Option A or B for your Virtual Courtroom layout, follow these first 6 steps below:

1. Secure Your Supplies

- a. Secure (2X) rooms, equipment and supplies that match those described in the section above

2. Consult Social Distancing Guidelines

- a. Decide whether Option A or B works best for you

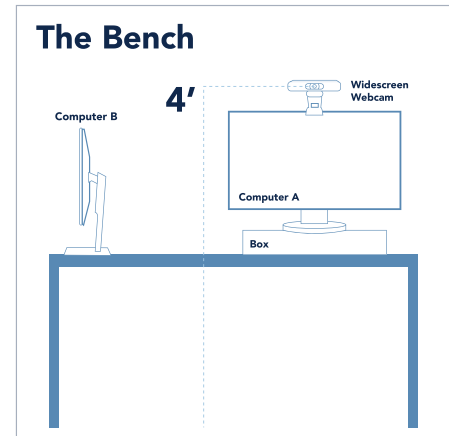
3. You May Proceed! Set up the Bench

- a. Remember to select a table that's big enough for Computer A, a monitor (if you decide to use one) and your timekeeper
 - i. Set up your widescreen camera so it is ~4' from the ground to present the judges with an optimal view
 - ii. If you are using a standard table, you may have to use an object to elevate the computer (see diagram)
- b. Your timekeeper's station should be set up perpendicular to Computer A - they will need to be able to display timecards to you and operate the computer when showing evidence as necessary

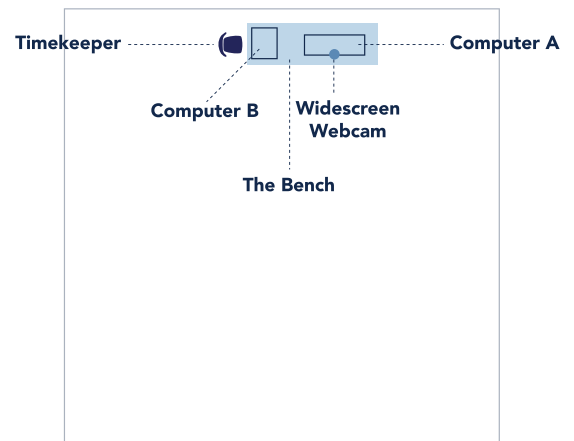
4. The Center of the Virtual Well (CW) - Where the Magic Happens!

- a. Measure 4' straight from the front of the Bench straight into the well. Place an X on the ground or create a small line parallel to the webcam.
- b. No student should ever cross the line, otherwise they'll appear warped to the judge given the widescreen nature of the lens
- c. All future measurements will be made in relation to the CW

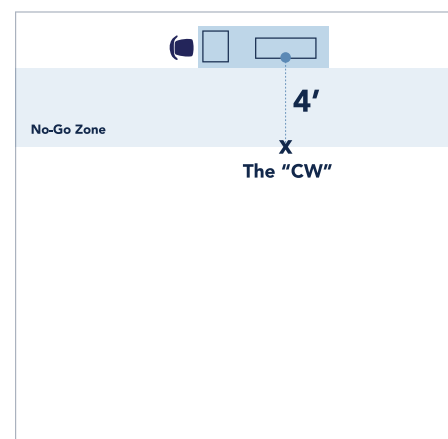
STEP 3



STEP 3

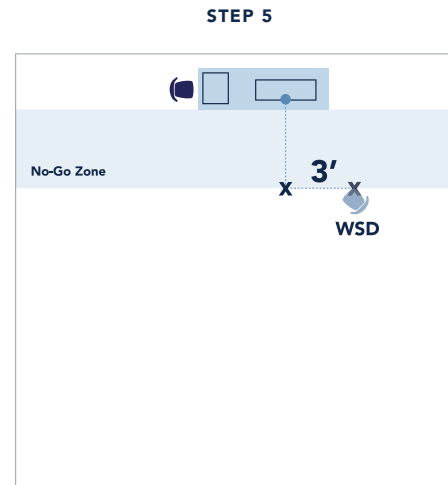


STEP 4



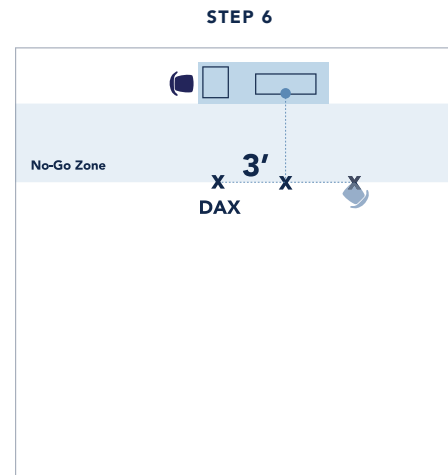
5. Create the Witness Stand (WSD) for Direct ONLY

- Measure 3' to the right of your CW marking
 - Chair should be light, so you can easily move it for statements and for the witness's cross
- Place another X on the ground to signify position of the chair
- Place front right corner of the chair on the X at a 45 degree angle



6. Mark Where the Directing Attorney (DAX) Lives

- Measure 3' to the left of your CW marking
- Place an X on the ground at a 45 degree angle
- Attorney's foot should never cross the X;



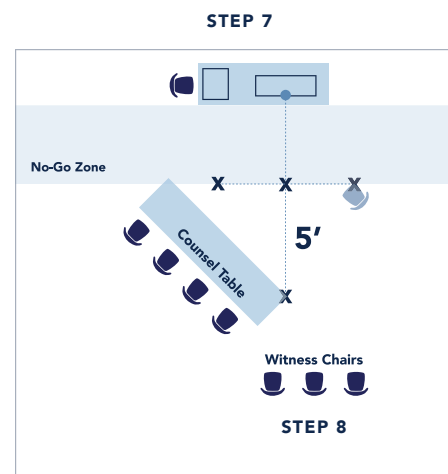
Completing Option A:

7. You May Be Seated! Setup Counsel Table

- Measure 5' straight back from the CW marking
- Place an X on the ground
- Place front right corner of counsel table on X at 45 degree angle. Your table should be 6-10' in length

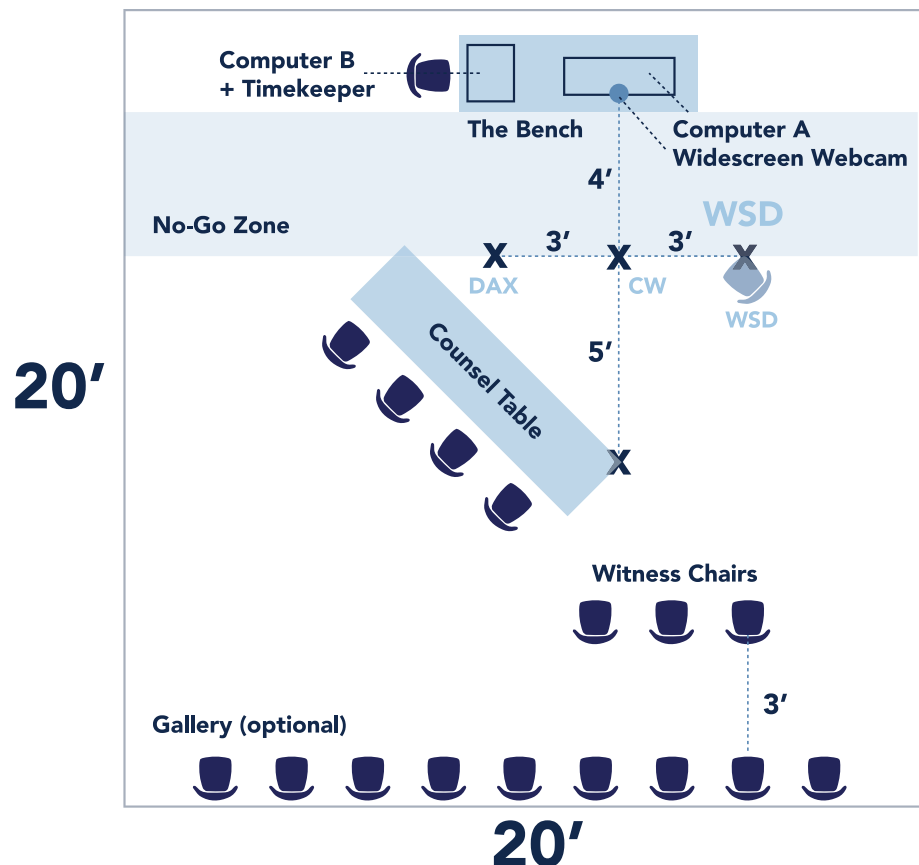
8. Setup Witness Chairs in Back of Room

- Chairs should be positioned so they are in view of the judge, as pictured in the diagram
- We leave it up to you how far away and far apart the witness chairs are, as long as they are visible to the judge



- a. Be sure to leave at least 3' in between competing students and the gallery

- a. Connect widescreen webcam to Computer A;
make sure computer is plugged in
- b. Connect monitors or speakers to Computer A,
if you plan to use (not necessary)
- c. Ensure that all students are visible in the
widescreen webcam's shot



Completing Option B:

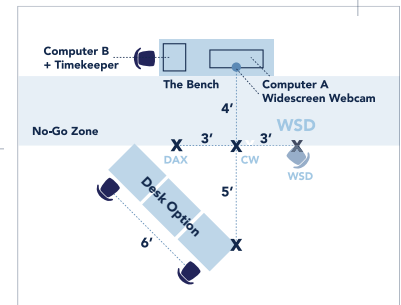
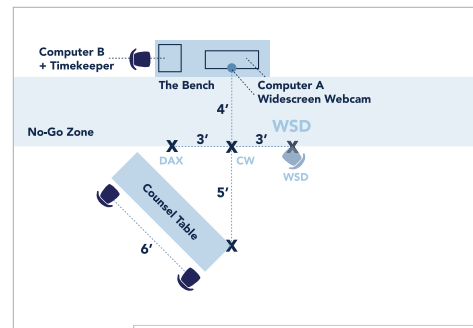
7. You May Be Seated! Setup Counsel Tables

- Measure 5' straight back from the CW marking
- Place an X on the ground
- Place front right corner of your first counsel table on X at 45 degree angle. Your table should be 6-10' in length, or you can feel free to use 2-4 desks positioned side-by-side
- Position 2 chairs at your first counsel table. Ensure they are spaced 6' apart (or the required safe distance your area prescribes)
- Set-up your second counsel table behind the first. Align the left edge of the second counsel table to the center of the first counsel table. Tables should appear offset. Ensure the second counsel table is parallel to the first.
- Position 2 chairs at the second counsel table, ensuring they are ~6' apart. Also ensure that chairs positioned at the second counsel table are ~6'+ away from chairs at the first counsel table
- Do a camera check! Ensure that all students sitting at either counsel table are visible through the widescreen webcam. If not, adjust as needed.

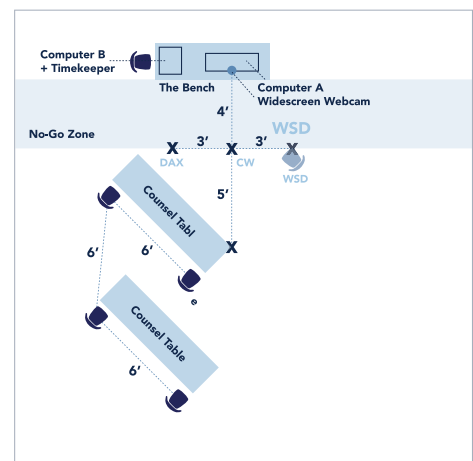
8. Setup Witness Chairs in Back of Room

- Start by measuring 6' to the right of the chair circled in yellow in the diagram to the right. Place your first witness chair here
- Measure 6' in front of Witness 1's chair, and place the chair for Witness 2
- Measure 6' to the right of Witness 1's chair, and place the chair for Witness 3
- Do a camera check! Ensure that all witness chairs are visible through the widescreen webcam. If not, adjust as needed.

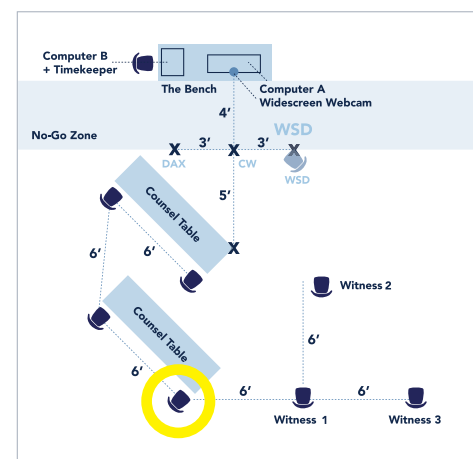
STEP 7



STEP 7 (e)



STEP 8



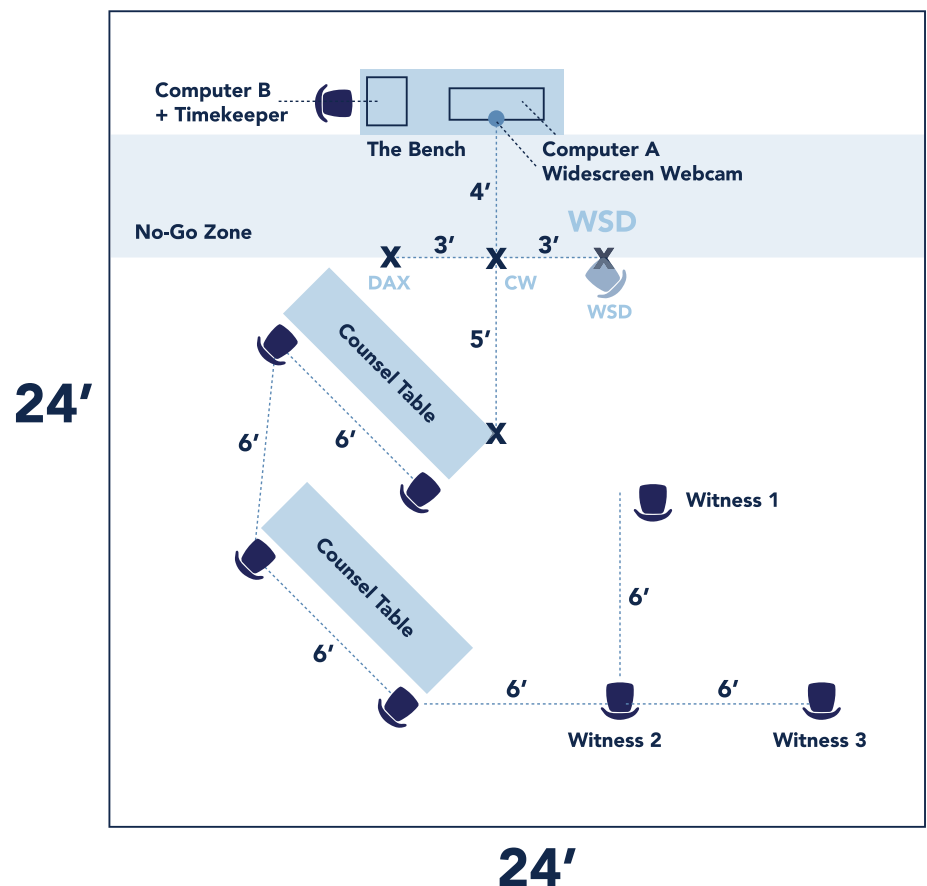
9. Beyond the Bar—Create Gallery (If you can)

- Please consult your COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions to determine if you are able to include a gallery for spectators in your VC.
- If you decide to create a gallery for spectators, ensure that chairs are spaced at least 6' apart from each other and at least 6' away from any competing student.

10. Connect and Test All Electronics

- Connect widescreen webcam to Computer A; make sure computer is plugged in
- Connect monitors or speakers to Computer A, if you plan to use (not necessary)
- Ensure that all students are visible in the widescreen webcam's shot

Completed Courtroom B (with all measurements)

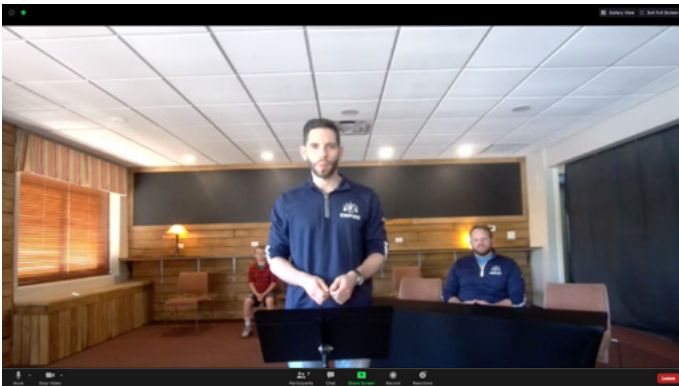


10 Steps for Creating your Virtual Courtroom

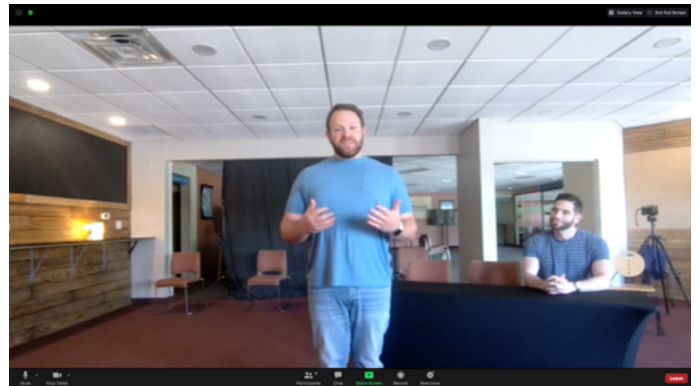


Making Sure your VC looks right on camera

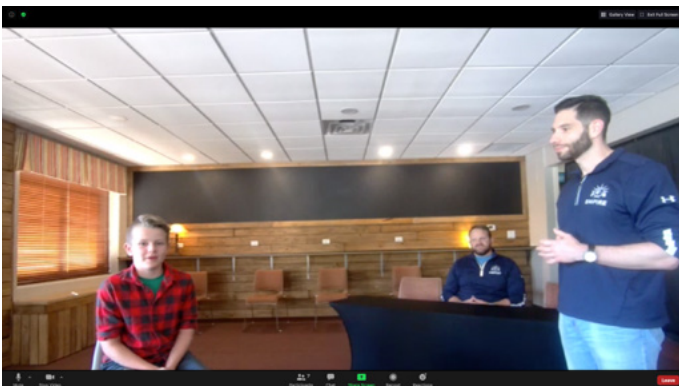
It is important to make sure that all of your students can be seen by the camera! Here's what different portions of the trial should look like to your judges.



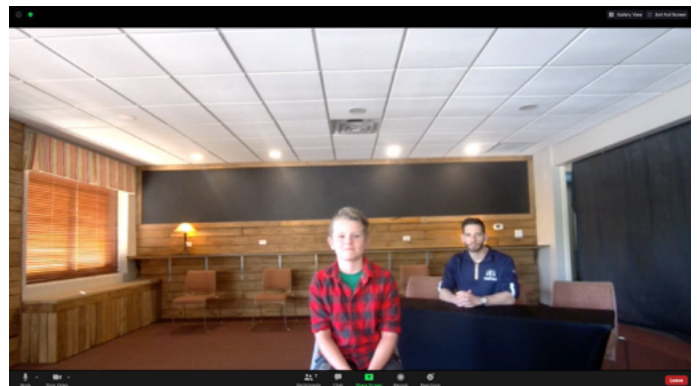
Pre-Trial Oral Argument



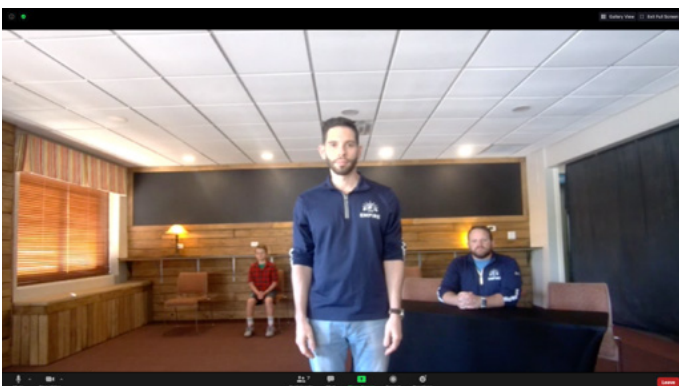
Opening Statement



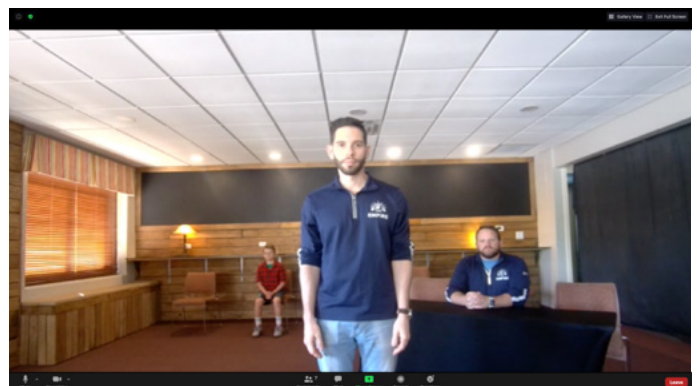
Direct Examination



Cross Examination - Witnesses



Closing Argument



Cross Examination - Attorneys

Creating Your Virtual Guest Witness Stand



Take a look at the final product and let's work backwards.
This is how we want your final shot to appear:



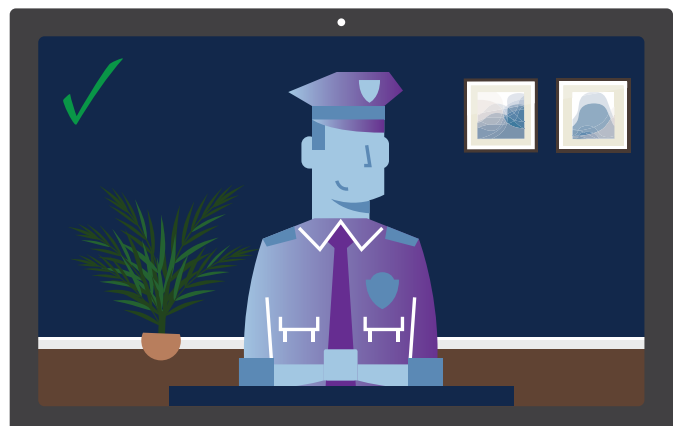
How do we get there? Just a few easy steps:

1) Select your room. Select your room for the Guest Witness stand. The room doesn't have to be a particular size. Rather, what's important is ensuring that you position yourself properly in front of the camera.

- a. Ideally, your room should be as close to your team's Virtual Courtroom as possible so you can re-join your team after your testimony.

2. Make sure there's nothing in the background that you wouldn't want a judge to see.

- a. Unmade bed? Glare from a window? Maybe not. Instead, find a well-lit room with strong wifi and nothing distracting in the background.



3) Make sure your computer's webcam is the right height.

Ensuring your webcam is at the right height is crucial to establishing the perfect shot. The 'right height' varies from person-to-person and depends on your height, the size of your laptop screen or monitor, and the height of your desk.

When setting up your webcam, we recommend using these measurements as a guide. They were created after testing by students, of differing heights, using a desk that's a standard height (~30").

4) Elevate your computer.

You can do so by placing a stack of books or a box underneath. Ensure there is room for a keyboard and mouse on the desk, if using a computer monitor.

Next, measure vertically from the top of your computer to the ground. Consider moving your computer to the edge of the desk, like depicted, when measuring. Add as many books/boxes as you need to get this measurement to the height that works for you.

Computer Height
Refers to height from webcam to the ground.

37" ↔ 43"

Your Height

4'11" ↔ 6'1"

~37"-43"

Laptop with
Built-in Webcam

Books

Laptop Option

~37"-43"

Webcam

Monitor

Small Box

Desktop Option

- 5) Putting it all together** - Ensure there's 2-3" between the top of your head and the top of the frame, and you're centered in the screen.

Your Computer Screen





Empire One Trial Customs

We've developed the following customs for presenting in virtual court in the State of Empirion, which are applicable when one group of attorneys and one group of witnesses are present in one virtual courtroom. All judges will be made aware of these customs and all teams are expected to abide by them:

- We present all examinations and statements standing in our virtual well, if we are physically able to do so;
- For purposes of expediency, there are no Pre-Trial Introductions. Your judge will ask you to introduce yourself for the first time, prior to your first presentation of the day;
- We always stand when addressing the Court;
- When raising objections, we stand and state the grounds for our objection from behind counsel table. If we are given an opportunity to further argue an objection, we may step into the well;
- We may set up a podium in the well, but should consult the Setup Guide to ensure it's not positioned too close to the bench / camera;
- Our witnesses shall testify from their virtual witness stand, positioned in accordance w/ the Empire One Setup Guide. Their positioning on direct and cross is also defined by the Guide. If the witness would like to stand to make use of a demonstrative, they may;
- Timekeepers are responsible for controlling the presentation of any exhibits or case materials using the screen share feature.