

Rules of Courtroom Conduct

The pursuit of justice is a serious undertaking and conduct during the litigation process, both within and outside the courtroom, must at all times satisfy the requirements of fairness and equal treatment. Dignity, order, and decorum are indispensable to the proper administration of justice.

A trial is an adversarial proceeding and the parties must advocate for their respective positions. However, conduct that may be characterized as discriminatory, abusive, or obstructive impedes the fundamental goal of resolving disputes rationally, peacefully and efficiently. Such conduct tends to delay and often to deny justice.

A trial is also a truth seeking process designed to resolve human and societal problems in a rational and efficient manner. Conduct should be characterized at all times by personal courtesy and professional integrity in the fullest sense of those terms.

These rules are intended to facilitate access to the courts for the fair resolution of issues and will never be applied arbitrarily simply to deny access.

General Courtroom Conduct for Spectators

Remove all overcoats, hats, gloves and sunglasses prior to entering the courtroom.

Turn off all phones, pagers and computers prior to entering the courtroom.

No large bags, backpacks, boxes or other containers are allowed in the courtroom.

No food or drink other than clear water in a clear bottle is allowed in the courtroom.

Stand when the Judge enters or leaves the Courtroom.

Remain quiet while court is in session.

Do not interrupt or distract the Judge or counsel while court is in session.

Wear attire that appropriately reflects the seriousness of judicial proceedings.

All spectators must remain seated while court is in session, no standing.

Media Access and Recording Devices

The Court recognizes the important role that media plays in our free society.

Nevertheless, it is essential that persons who appear before the Court, either as civil litigants or as criminal defendants, receive a fair trial, uninfluenced by the media or other forms of coverage including internet postings.

In order to provide for reasonable media access to court proceedings, while at the same time protecting the dignity and rights of victims, witnesses and other persons who are appearing before the Court, the following procedures shall be observed:

Broadcasting, televising, video recording, audio recording or photography in the courtroom shall be allowed only with PRIOR permission of the Court and with the following restrictions.

1. The use of cameras or recording devices will be limited to credentialed members of publicly broadcast television and radio networks or newspapers.
2. Jurors may not be photographed or recorded in any manner.
3. No portion of jury selection may be photographed or recorded in any manner.
4. No victim or witness may be photographed or recorded without their consent.
5. Cameras or other recording devices, when allowed, shall be placed in a fixed position and remain stationary during the entire proceeding. All devices must be used in a manner that does not in any way disrupt the proceedings.

SECURITY

In any case where a person believes that a potentially dangerous situation might arise, that person should notify the judge or court staff immediately so that appropriate security measures can be taken.

Weapons; Only on-duty law enforcement officers or court security personnel shall be entitled to bring or carry firearms, knives, batons, pepper spray or any other weapons in to the courthouse, courtroom, or court offices.

Search; Anyone wishing to enter the courtroom is subject to metal detector security screening and may be required to submit to a search of his or her person or belongings by law enforcement or other court security personnel.

Contact with Prisoners or Detainees; No person other than security staff, court staff or counsel of record may have contact with or communicate with in-custody prisoners or pre-trial detainees at any time said persons are in the Courtroom or being transported to or from the Courthouse.

Disobedience of Rules

Any person disregarding the rules set forth herein will be directed to leave the courtroom immediately. They may be denied re-admittance and may be held in contempt of court if a warning is ignored.