

Information for Media/Journalists

Overview

The Court is committed to facilitating access to court dockets, documents and proceedings for journalists.

Judges and court staff will not comment on individual cases. Such inquiries should be directed to attorneys in the case as listed on the case docket.

Members of the media are expected to learn and abide by the Court's policies on contacting the Court and on the use of electronic devices in the courthouse, available on this page.

Contacting the Court

A wealth of information is available on the Court's website and public docket. Journalists are expected to make their best efforts to obtain answers to their questions by reviewing the pertinent web pages.

Journalists should contact the court's media contact with all other questions concerning court proceedings and documents. Email is the preferred method of contact.

Media Contact: Kim A. Criswell

Media Contact email: kim_criswell@wvnd.uscourts.gov

Journalists should not contact the assigned judge's courtroom deputy, or chambers directly for any reason.

Finding Documents and Other Information in a Particular Case

This Court uses an electronic case filing system (CM/ECF or Case Management/Electronic Case Files system). Public information entered into CM/ECF is available through PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records). PACER is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case and docket information from federal appellate, district and bankruptcy courts, and from the U.S. Party/Case Index. Information regarding the scheduling of a hearing will be posted to the docket when the date is set by the Court. Please check PACER for updates.

PACER: <https://pacer.login.uscourts.gov/csologin/login.jsf>

[Free PACER Training/Practice Site](#)

Cases of Interest

Transcripts

Transcripts may be purchased through the court reporter, viewed at the public terminal, or viewed through PACER after they have been released. Unless a transcript is sealed or otherwise restricted by the court, transcripts are released on PACER 90 days after being docketed.

Court Rules Affecting the Media: Photography/Video/Broadcasting/Recording

The Court has strict rules governing the use of electronic devices, photography, and audio and video recording in its courthouses. All journalists planning to cover a proceeding in this court are expected to review and abide by these rules. Violations of these rules may result in sanctions.

Photographing and Broadcasting Court Proceedings; Electronic Equipment:

Local Rule of General Procedure 85.01. Photography in and Broadcasting from Courtroom.

The taking of photographs in the courtroom, or in the corridors immediately adjacent, and the transmitting of sound recording of proceedings for broadcast by radio, television or other forms of media during judicial proceedings or during any recess are not permitted. Upon approval of the Court and under its supervision, non-judicial proceedings designed and conducted as ceremonies, such as administering oaths of office to appointed officials of the Court, presentation of portraits, naturalization proceedings and similar ceremonial occasions may be photographed in or broadcasted from the courtroom.

Local Rules General Procedure 85.02. Impoundment of Equipment.

The United States Marshal, Deputy United States Marshals and Court Security Officers may impound any camera, recording, broadcasting or other related equipment brought into the courtroom or the adjacent corridors in violation of LR Gen P 85.01. The impounded equipment shall be returned to its owner or custodian after the proceedings have concluded.

Local Rules General Procedure 85.03. Electronic Equipment in the Courthouse.

Attorneys are permitted limited use of electronic devices, such as cellular telephones, pagers, PDAs, smartphones, tablet devices, and laptop computers, in the courthouses within the District. Any audio or video recording of proceedings, or the taking of photographs by any means, is not permitted while in the courthouse. All electronic devices are to be programmed so as to not emit any audible noise while in the courtrooms. PDAs, smartphones, tablet devices, and laptop computers may be used to assist attorneys in data entry or data display in furtherance of courtroom proceedings. The use of electronic devices for purposes of transmitting or receiving is not permitted while in the courtrooms. The use of electronic devices shall not be disruptive to court proceedings. Electronic devices of any kind are not permitted in the grand jury rooms. Each judicial officer may modify this Rule as the circumstances warrant.

JOURNALIST'S GUIDE TO THE FEDERAL COURTS

The Administrative Office has published "A Journalist's Guide to the Federal Courts," which is intended to assist representatives of the media assigned to court coverage.

<http://www.uscourts.gov/News/JournalistsGuide.aspx>