

Nebraska Courthouse Customs

The Supreme Court courtroom in the State Capitol has a sign that reads:

- No weapons
- All bags, brief cases and packages are subject to search
- All telephone or other communication devices shall be turned off (means all off, not silenced)
- No camera or recording device allowed in the courtroom without prior approval
- No entry during oral arguments
- No food or drink allowed

The rules listed above are enforced, to varying degrees, in all courtrooms across the state. Some are more relaxed; know the culture of the courthouse before you go.

Courtroom/courthouse considerations:

Use courtesy titles for judges: Using the title “judge” and the judge’s last name is appropriate and expected no matter the level of judge.

Clothing: “No hats” is a fairly common rule, as is a requirement for professional clothing.

In the courtroom:

You will need to stay in the location assigned by the Media Coordinator. The video should begin when the judge calls the courtroom to order and end when the hearing is over – no panning the courtroom, shots of the defendant/attorneys chatting during breaks or after court, or shots of anyone entering or exiting the courtroom. Journalists are invited into the courtroom for gavel-to-gavel coverage – from the beginning to end of the formal session.

The inside of the courtroom is NOT the place for follow-up or individual interviews -- take it outside. Also, no editing or playback of recordings – NO additional distractions/noise making during hearings. Camera shutter noises must not be distracting.

No photos without permission means no photos without permission of the **judge**. No cellphone photos, no video, no SLR, nothing.

No recording without permission means no recording without permission of the **judge**. No recording-for-personal-use (must ask the judge, but do not need to file a form), no cellphone recording, no laptop recording, nothing.

Posting video:

The individual or entity posting the video or image taken inside the courtroom is responsible for the final image presented to the public. Edit wisely.



1/23/2017

Nebraska Supreme Court Rules for Expanded News Media Coverage in Nebraska Trial Courts

Found on the Judicial Branch website: www.supremecourt.nebraska.gov under the "Media" tab.

****Expanded media coverage includes cameras, audio recording, still photography and live electronic reporting by news media. This rule does not alter access to the courtroom by anyone not using electronic equipment.***

Rule Highlights for Members of the Media:

1. Rules apply to County and District Courts in Nebraska – not juvenile or worker's comp courts.
2. Reporters must be credentialed and credentials must be worn in a visible location.
3. Prior authorization is required. Forms are provided on the Judicial Branch Website – the form requires media to list the type of equipment requested to be brought into the courtroom.
4. Each court has a designated Media Coordinator to receive forms and assist with arrangements.
5. Requests must be made 7 days prior -- certain county court proceedings have a shorter request time.
6. The Media Coordinator will file the request for coverage with the court and electronically send the request to all parties along with hand delivering the request to the judge.
7. Pool coverage is required: 1 camera, 1 video, 1 audio. Media Coordinators will designate pool provider on a first-come first-served basis.
8. Coverage is limited – In all circumstances, coverage of jurors is limited. Also, there is no photography of private communication between an attorney and anyone else in the courtroom.
9. Reporters must remain in a stationary position, no moving about when court is in session.
10. Coverage is to begin after the judges calls court to order and is done as soon as the judge dismisses participants.
11. Expanded media coverage may be denied or limited.
12. Some proceedings do not allow expanded news media coverage unless all parties agree otherwise:
 - i. Criminal: Pretrial motions
 - ii. Grand Juries
 - iii. Juvenile Court
 - iv. Under age 19 defendants, unless criminally charged as an adult
 - v. Divorce/modification/child support
 - vi. Adoptions
 - vii. Paternity
 - viii. Protection order
 - ix. Probate
 - x. Trade Secret
 - xi. Summoned and/or impaneled jurors (those called to a jury as well as those serving)