



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

John Nevin, Communications Director

Ph: 517-373-0129 Twitter: @MISupremeCourt FB: facebook.com/misupremecourt

Guidelines for Photographing Sessions of Court

The Michigan Supreme Court is committed to educating the public about the justice system. To that end, the Court encourages the public to attend oral arguments and public hearings, and encourages journalists to cover those Court proceedings. The Court also asks journalists and members of the public to show respect for parties, attorneys, courtroom observers, and the justice system by observing proper decorum.

Film or electronic coverage of Supreme Court proceedings

The Michigan Supreme Court follows the procedure outlined in the Michigan Supreme Court's Administrative Order (AO) 1989-1 (see link). Please review this procedure before making a request for film or electronic coverage of oral arguments and hearings. [Administrative Order 1989-1](#).

Requests for film or electronic coverage must be made at least three business days before proceedings are scheduled to begin. The request must be in writing, using the SCAO form, "Request and Notice for Film and Electronic Media Coverage of Court Proceedings." To get the form, [click here](#).

The Court has discretion to waive these requirements. Media who fail to comply with AO 1989-1, however, should expect to be denied permission for film or electronic coverage in the courtroom.

In addition, media who need an audit feed must notify the Office of Public Information at least one day in advance.

Media who are granted permission for film or electronic coverage must arrive well in advance—at least half an hour—of the time Court proceedings are scheduled to begin. All equipment must be in place and tested at least 15 minutes in advance of the starting time scheduled for the Court session. Those media who are granted permission for film or electronic coverage, but arrive less than 15 minutes in advance of the starting time for Court proceedings, will not be admitted.

Electronic media must tape down all cables with cloth gaffer's tape; tape on the floor must not create a safety hazard. Tape cannot be placed on courtroom paneling.

Courtroom observers may not move about the room while Court is in session. This particularly applies to media with recording or photographic equipment, who must remain in one place throughout the proceedings.

Media interviews

Media may not conduct any interviews of parties, attorneys, or any other persons in the Supreme Court courtroom. Interviews may not be conducted at or near the courtroom doors. Media should contact the Office of Public Information in advance to find out if the Court will permit media to conduct interviews in the courtroom lobby or elsewhere in the Hall of Justice.

Public access to Michigan court proceedings

As of May 1, 2003, a Michigan state court “may not limit access by the public to a court proceeding” unless the court finds that “a specific interest to be protected” outweighs the right of public access (Michigan Court Rule 8.116). The court must also find that “there is no less restrictive means to adequately and effectively protect the interest.” The rule also permits “any person” to challenge the court’s decision to limit public access. For the full text of this rule, [click here](#).

Courtroom etiquette

Out of courtesy for the Court, attorneys, parties, and speakers at public hearings, all in the courtroom should remain quiet and avoid disrupting the proceedings. Cell phones and pagers must be turned off or placed on “silent” or “vibrate” mode. Do not move around the courtroom or repeatedly exit and enter the room. Do not bring food or beverages into the courtroom. The Court has discretion to admonish anyone who disrupts courtroom proceedings, and to order the removal of anyone who does not comply with the Court’s request for proper courtroom behavior.

Distribution of printed materials, such as brochures and flyers, is prohibited both in the courtroom and in the Hall of Justice.