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Uniform Rules of Practice  
Circuit Court of Illinois  
Nineteenth Judicial Circuit

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CIRCUIT CLERK

## **Chapter 1, Administration of the Courts, Part 4.00 Use of Electronic Devices and Recording Equipment**

### **1-4.01 Electronic Devices, Photographing, Broadcasting & Recording Devices**

#### **A. General Allowances and Prohibitions.**

1. Recording of court proceedings in person or remotely is prohibited and may be subject to criminal prosecution, contempt of court, and any other sanctions deemed necessary by the court.
2. Subject to screening and compliance with these rules, Portable Electronic Devices may be allowed in court facilities.
3. If permitted, all Portable Electronic Devices must be placed in "silent" mode within court facilities, and court visitors shall ensure that audio or video transmissions do not interfere with court proceedings.
4. No phone calls, text messages, photographs or video shall be sent or received within any courtroom except as permitted below.
5. The use of speakerphones, videotelephony, or video conferencing applications (including but not limited to FaceTime and Zoom) is strictly prohibited in all Court Facilities and their environs. However, case participants may use court-approved videotelephony to participate in remote court in conference rooms, lobbies, hallways, or the law library provided that such use does not interfere with the use of said premises by others present.
6. Photography, broadcasting, audio or video recording, live streaming, and social media broadcasting are prohibited in all Court Facilities areas and their surrounding environs.
7. All rules regarding the use of electronic devices apply equally to remote court proceedings, including those conducted via Zoom or other videoconferencing platforms. Participants are expected to follow the same standards of conduct and courtroom behavior as required when appearing in-person.

#### **B. Definitions.**

1. "Case participant" means any individual participating in a court proceeding including but not limited to the parties, criminal defendants, minors, lawyers, guardians *ad litem*, guardians, youth in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), witnesses, interpreters, treatment providers, probation officers, pretrial officers, DCFS caseworkers and contract service providers, court reporters, clerks of court, and the judge presiding over the case. This term does not include jurors, the public, or members of the media that are not a party or witness in the case.
2. "Court Facilities" refers to the following: all Nineteenth Judicial Circuit courthouses

and buildings, including the Lake County Courthouse (Main) (from the South Atrium on the north end of the building to the Criminal Tower on the south), the Criminal Tower, Adult Probation & Psychological Services, Pretrial Services, Mundelein Branch Court, North Branch Court (Round Lake Beach), Park City Branch Court, Robert W. Depke Juvenile Complex Center (Juvenile Court, Probation, and Detention Services, the Office of the Guardian *ad Litem*, and the Circuit Clerk of Lake County), ), and the Lake County Arbitration Center. Additionally, all court security desks and security magnetometers are included in Court Facilities.

- The North Atrium, Lake County Clerk's Office, Lake County Treasurer's Office and the Lake County Administration Tower are subject to the rules of Lake County Administration and are not included in Court Facilities.
3. "Court visitor" means any individual present at a court facility.
  4. "Environs" refers to the following areas:
    - a. All courtrooms, private and public hallways, rooms adjacent to said hallways and to the courtroom, witness or jury assembly/deliberation rooms, conference rooms, law library, Kids Korner, Court Administration, public restrooms, corridors and lobbies.
    - b. The offices of Adult Probation & Psychological Services, Pretrial Services, Juvenile Probation and Detention Services, the Office of Guardian *ad Litem*, the Circuit Clerk of Lake County, public restrooms, corridors and lobbies immediately adjacent to those offices.
    - c. In the interest of conducting a fair trial in a particular case, the Court may expand the area of environs in a written order.
  5. "Portable Electronic Devices" are mobile devices capable of recording or storing by any means, accessing, or transmitting information including but are not limited to personal computers, tablet computers, mobile telephones (including cell phones and any form of telephone with cameras and audio and video recording and transmission capabilities), electronic calendars, e-book readers, smartwatches, and similar devices.
- C. **Electronic Devices in Courtroom.** Case participants may use portable electronic devices in the courtroom solely for the purposes of assisting in their case, provided that the device is silenced and in no way interferes with the dignity and decorum of the courtroom or its activities. This may include checking calendars, reviewing documents related to the case, presenting case-related information, or conducting legal research.
- D. **Jurors.** No individual shall take photographs, or audio or video recordings of prospective jurors or jurors at any time. No individual shall use Portable Electronic Devices to communicate or attempt to communicate with any potential juror or juror at any time.

- E. **Witnesses.** No individual shall take photographs or make audio or video recordings of witnesses at any time. No individual shall use Portable Electronic Devices to harass, intimidate, or communicate about given testimony with any witness at any time.
- F. **Other Electronic Devices.** Cameras, video cameras, video recording equipment and recording devices not classified as Portable Electronic Devices are not allowed in Court Facilities without the express approval of the Chief Judge or where Extended Media Coverage has been approved.
- G. **Decorum Orders.** The Court may issue an order governing such matters as extra-judicial statements by parties and witnesses, the seating and conduct in the courtroom of spectators and news media representatives, the management and sequestration of jurors and witnesses, and any other matters which the Court may deem appropriate for inclusion in such an order.
- H. **Confiscation Of Equipment and Ejection.** Anyone using a Portable Electronic Device, or possessing other electronic devices, in violation of this or any other court order or policy may be removed from Court Facilities, held in contempt of court, and/or subject to penalties as provided by law. Any Portable Electronic Device used in violation of an order may be confiscated or seized by law enforcement officers for investigative purposes. Court personnel shall not be responsible or liable for any damage to or loss of a confiscated Portable Electronic Device.
- I. **Restrictions On Portable Electronic Devices.** If the Chief Judge determines that Portable Electronic Devices interfere with the administration of justice or cause a threat to safety or security, he or she may prohibit Portable Electronic Devices from being carried into specific courtrooms (for example, courtrooms hearing certain criminal cases) or into the Court Facilities as a whole.
- J. **Non-Judicial Events and Activities.** The Court may permit photography, broadcasting, and recording of non-judicial events and activities, or of judicial personnel or facilities, for educational, instructional, informational, or ceremonial purposes. Such non-judicial events and activities include, but are not limited to, weddings, graduations in problem solving courts, bar association activities, induction ceremonies, award ceremonies, dedication ceremonies, mock trials, seminars, training sessions, journalistic undertakings not covered by extended media coverage, public awareness activities, and similar events and activities.
- K. **Extended Media Coverage.** The terms and requirements for extended media approval are set forth in Local Rule 1-4.03.
- L. **Enforcement.** The Lake County Sheriff's Office shall enforce this rule.
- M. **Attorneys.** Attorneys should advise their clients, witnesses and support staff of this Rule.
- N. **Purpose.** The purpose of this policy is to protect and enhance the safety of the public, case participants, and the integrity of the judicial process. The policy

establishes order and decorum in all Court Facilities, ensuring that the courtroom environment supports and enhances the fair and impartial administration of justice. Consistent with practices in other circuit courts in Illinois and the Northern District of Illinois, the 19th Judicial Circuit's policy guarantees the public's right to access the courts and observe judicial proceedings while protecting the safety of those who come to court and enhancing the integrity of the judicial process.

#### **1-4.02 Official Use of Recording and Broadcasting by the Court.**

A. **Authorized Court Personnel.** Authorized court personnel, which include judges, court clerks, court services personnel and court reporters, may operate computers, including laptops and personal computers, within the courtroom while court is in session when such operation is in furtherance of or related to official court business.

B. **Approved Broadcasting and Digital Recording of Proceedings.**

Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 1-4.01:

1. Court proceedings may be conducted remotely in accordance with Local Court Rules and Illinois Supreme Court Rules.
2. Court proceedings may be recorded digitally by certified court reporters in the performance of their regular duties or by digital equipment, subject to regulations of the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts and Orders of the Court.
3. Digital recordings of proceedings shall remain under the control of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit.

C. **Lake County Sheriff's Office.**

1. All recordings from security cameras monitoring court facilities and security magnetometers are the property of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Court and are deemed to be in the possession of the Court notwithstanding actual possession by another party.
2. Video or images captured on a body camera in a Nineteenth Judicial Circuit court facility, courtroom, its environs or the security magnetometers are court security video and are deemed to be in the possession of the Court notwithstanding actual possession by another party.
3. Any requests for disclosure of a video or image captured on body worn or security cameras monitoring the facilities of the 19th Judicial Circuit must be (1) in writing and (2) presented to the Chief Judge.

#### **1-4.03 EXTENDED MEDIA COVERAGE.**

A. Extended media coverage in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit is permitted in accordance with the provisions contained in Illinois Supreme Court Order M.R. 2634 and the Policy for Extended Media Coverage in Circuit Courts of Illinois.

News media organizations shall comply with the Rules regarding the general use of cellular phones and other electronic devices within the courtrooms and outside of the courtrooms, but still within the confines of the courthouse. Nothing in this Rule shall limit or restrict the power, authority or responsibility otherwise vested in the Chief Judge of the Circuit; and the Judge presiding to: control the conduct of any proceeding; maintain decorum and prevent distractions; guarantee the safety of the courtroom, including any party, witness, or juror; and ensure the fair and impartial administration of justice in the pending cause.

**B. Media Coordinator and Court Media Liaison.**

1. **Media Coordinator.** A single representative acting on behalf of all news media organizations shall be selected to organize and submit requests for extended media coverage and administer all aspects of extended media coverage for the news media. The Media Coordinator shall be selected by and among representatives of the news media and shall be approved by the Chief Judge.
2. **Court Media Liaison.** A representative from Court Administration shall serve as the Court Media Liaison. The Court Media Liaison is responsible to the Court and shall work with the Media Coordinator on all matters pertaining to extended media coverage. The Media Liaison may consult with the Trial Judge regarding any questions or concerns from the media and may direct the media consistent with the rulings of the Trial Judge regarding extended media coverage of any case. The Trial Judge may direct the Media Liaison to convey any changes or alterations to the Order entered in the case to interested individuals or organizations.

**C. Requests, Objections and Orders.**

1. **Notice of Requests for Extended Media Coverage.** Notices for Requests for Extended Media Coverage shall be filed with the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. The form for filing a Request for Extended Media Coverage shall be as prescribed in Appendix "A."
2. **Notices of Requests for Extended Media Coverage.** The Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall send a written Notice and copy of the Request for Extended Media Coverage to the following persons:
  - a. Attorneys of Record;
  - b. Self-represented litigants;
  - c. The Court Media Liaison;
  - d. The Judge presiding over the case for which extended media coverage is sought;
  - e. The Chief Judge.

The form of the Notice to be sent by the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall be as prescribed in Appendix "C."

The Notice and copy of the Request shall be sent by first class mail or facsimile transmission or delivered by personal service, no later than the close of business on the day following the filing of the Request. The Chief Judge may order alternate means of service, such as electronic mail, for persons identified in Sections C through E of this Rule.

3. **Objections by Parties.** The form for a party to object to extended media coverage shall be as prescribed in Appendix "D."
4. **Objections by Witnesses.** All witnesses shall be notified by counsel proposing to introduce testimony from a witness of their right to object to extended media coverage. Notification shall be provided by using the form as prescribed in Appendix "E," or a substantially similar form. Objections by witnesses shall be filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court prior to the commencement of the proceeding. Any objecting witness shall file his or her objection using the form as prescribed in Appendix "F," or a substantially similar form. Counsel shall file proof that Notice was provided to the witness(es) each counsel intends to call at trial.
5. **Notice of Objections.** The Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall provide written Notice of all filed objections to extended media coverage to the persons designated in Section (C)(2) and to the Media Coordinator.
6. **Written Orders.** The Judge shall enter a written Order on all requests for extended media coverage specifying the scope of coverage permitted. An Order for extended media coverage shall be effective for all subsequent proceedings until the conclusion of the involved case(s) or as otherwise ordered by the Court and subject to ruling on any filed objections. The form of an Order for Extended Media Coverage shall be as prescribed in Appendix "B."
7. **Timeframe for Request and Objections.** Calendar days shall be used for the purpose of calculating the timeframes for the filing of requests and objections.
8. **Certain Trial Proceedings Prohibited from Extended Media Coverage.** Extended media coverage is prohibited in any court proceeding required under Illinois law to be held in private. No coverage shall be permitted in any juvenile, dissolution, adoption, child custody, evidence suppression or trade secret cases. Extended media coverage is also prohibited as to evidentiary pre-trial motions, including Motions in Limine and in all Specialty Court proceedings including drug court, veteran's court and mental health court due to the sensitive nature of these proceedings unless otherwise ordered by the Court.

#### **D. Equipment and Courtroom Conduct.**

1. **Enhanced Microphones.** Parabolic or other highly sensitive long-range microphones are prohibited.
2. **Assigned Locations.** The Court, in consultation with the Court's Court Media Liaison or designee will direct the news media to their assigned spot(s). Still photographers and videographers must stay seated unless they are positioned beyond the last row of spectator seats.

3. **Decorum.** In the courtroom, members of the news media shall:
  - a. Not make comments in the courtroom during court proceedings;
  - b. Not comment to or within hearing of the jury or any member thereof at any time before the jury is dismissed;
  - c. Not conduct interviews in the courtroom; and
  - d. Comply with the Orders and directives of the Court.
4. **Prohibition on Certain Materials.** Focusing on and photographing of materials on counsel tables, materials on evidence carts, or materials that have not yet been presented as evidence is prohibited.

**E. General Provisions.**

1. **Temporary and Permanent Installations.** The Judge may order the news media to install any manner of temporary courtroom alterations including, but not limited, to a screen or divider to conceal the jury from the view of recording equipment. No permanent installation of any audio or visual recording equipment shall be made nor shall any court facility be altered, unless approved in advance by the Chief Judge. All expenses for permanent or temporary installations shall be borne by the news media.
2. **Sub-contracting and Assignment.** Permission for extended media coverage shall not be sub-contracted or assigned.
3. **Non-exclusivity.** This Rule shall not preclude coverage of a judicial proceeding by other members of the news media who have not been granted permission for extended media coverage.
4. **Courthouse Security.** Court security policies require all persons and equipment entering the courthouse to pass through a magnetometer. News media representatives will not be permitted to bypass screening and should allow sufficient time to get through the magnetometer in advance of the commencement of proceedings.
5. **Inadmissibility in Proceedings.** Film, videotape, photograph and audio reproductions obtained by and through extended media coverage shall not affect the official court record of the proceeding for purposes of appeal or otherwise. Nor shall the same be admissible as evidence in the proceeding out of which it arose or in any proceeding subsequent or collateral thereto.
6. **Knowledge of Plan Provisions.** The Media Coordinator is charged with actual and constructive knowledge of the provisions contained within the Policy for Extended Media Coverage in Circuit Courts of Illinois and this Rule. By the submission of a Request for Extended Media Coverage, the Media Coordinator, respective agents from involved news media organizations and designees of such, acknowledge and agree to abide by all applicable provisions.
7. **Sanctions.** In addition to contempt and any other sanctions allowed by law, the Judge or Chief Judge may remove anyone violating the Policy for Extended Media Coverage in Circuit Courts of Illinois or this Rule from the courtroom and revoke the privileges for extended media coverage.

8. **Revocation of Permission.** If the Media Coordinator or any media representative fails to comply with the conditions set forth in the Policy for Extended Media Coverage in Circuit Courts of Illinois, this Rule or other Orders imposed by the Judge or Chief Judge, the Judge or Chief Judge may impose restrictions on the dissemination, broadcast and/or publication of extended media coverage.

Amended by the Circuit Judges  
of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit  
this 4<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2025 and  
effective immediately.