

Cameras in Court

Cameras in the Courtroom Procedures

The following guidelines are intended to clarify the process for obtaining permission for camera and/or audio coverage of court proceedings in Sedgwick County. Kansas Supreme Court Rule 1001 governs the use of cameras and recording devices in courtrooms in Kansas.

General Guidelines

- All requests for camera and/or audio coverage of court proceedings shall be directed to the media coordinator. Requests (with the exception of requests to cover 1st appearances) must be in writing. Requests must include the defendant's full name, and the case number if available. E-mail requests are preferred. The media coordinator will maintain a master list of all coverage requests submitted by the media.
- Media outlets are responsible for verifying permission for camera and/or audio coverage of a particular case at each stage of the proceeding.
- Media outlets are cautioned that approval of a request for cameras in a courtroom is discretionary and conditional, and may be withdrawn at any time.
- Photographers/Reporters must check in with the court to receive instructions on where to set up equipment and to receive any special instructions, prior to the beginning of court.
- Requests for photography of docket calls are case and defendant specific. Photography of defendants or participants in other cases is not permitted.
- Requests for coverage are confidential, and are not shared with other media outlets.
- In the event that multiple requests for camera and/or audio coverage of a trial are received, the first outlet requesting coverage will be designated as pool camera for the first day of the proceeding. Media outlets are responsible for making their own pool arrangements after the first day of the trial.
- Only one television camera is allowed in the courtroom. Duplication and distribution of video must be accomplished outside the courtroom.
- Media outlets have agreed that they are not entitled to pool images, audio or video unless they have staffed the proceeding for the day in question.

First Appearances

Requests for camera and/or audio coverage of first appearances should be directed to the media coordinator as early in the day as possible. Requests will be forwarded immediately to the court. Approval of requests may be assumed, unless otherwise notified by the court.

Preliminary Hearing Docket/Preliminary Hearings/ Pretrial Motions and Hearings

Pursuant to Rule 1001, written request for camera and/or audio coverage of criminal matters should be forwarded to the media coordinator as soon as possible following first appearances. The media coordinator will maintain a master list of all requests, and will forward copies of written requests for camera and/or audio coverage to the Criminal Court clerk for insertion into the case file, along with a copy to the Criminal Assignment court. Approval of requests to cover the preliminary hearing docket call may be assumed, unless otherwise notified by the court, so long as a proper written request is on file with the court.

The Criminal Assignment Court will notify the court to which a case is assigned for hearing of a properly filed media request for camera and/or audio coverage as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the requesting media to ascertain to what court the case is assigned, and to follow up with that court regarding permission for cameras and/or audio coverage.

Jury Trials

Rule 1001 requires that a request for camera and/or audio coverage be filed no less than one week prior to the proceeding.. It is the responsibility of the requesting media to ascertain to what court the case is assigned, and to follow up with the Media Coordinator or directly with the court regarding permission for cameras and/or audio coverage.

In cases where permission to cover a trial is denied, the court will notify the media coordinator as soon as possible.

Media outlets are responsible for maintaining their own court calendar, and for confirming permission for camera and/or audio coverage with the trial judge in advance of the proceeding.

Sentencing and Post Trial Hearings or Motions

Assuming that permission for camera and/or audio coverage was properly requested and granted, and that the case is still assigned to the trial judge, media outlets wishing to cover post trial motions and sentencing should simply communicate their intention to the trial judge in advance.

If the case has been reassigned, the media outlet should verify that they still have permission for camera and/or audio coverage with the new judge as soon as the hearing is scheduled.

Civil Court Procedures

Request for camera and/or audio coverage of all civil court proceedings should be directed to the media coordinator as soon as possible. The media coordinator will forward requests to the Civil Assignment court for review. The court will notify the media coordinator of the disposition of cases scheduled for trial for which a camera/audio request has been received.

Media outlets are responsible for maintaining their own court calendar, and for confirming permission for camera and/or audio coverage with the Media Coordinator or the trial judge in advance of the proceeding.

Contact Information

Requests for camera and/or audio coverage should be directed to Ellen House:

E-mail: ehouse@dc18.org

Fax: (316)941-5361

Phone: (316)660-5810

Cell: (316)648-8852

Media Coverage of Judicial Proceedings

Rule 1001: Preface

The increasing use of various electronic devices including phones, tablets, and other wireless communication devices continually challenges a court's legitimate concerns for courtroom security, participant distraction, and decorum.

These electronic devices are redefining the news media, the informational product disseminated, and the timeliness of the content. They also result in new expectations for the court and participants for immediate access to information.

Policies developed to address the court's concerns should include enough flexibility to take into consideration that electronic devices have become a necessary tool for court observers, journalists, and participants and continue to rapidly change and evolve. The courts should champion the enhanced access and the transparency made possible by use of these devices while protecting the integrity of proceedings within the courtroom.

Rule 1001: Permissible Use of Electronic Device

- A. During a judicial proceeding a person may possess - but not use - any of the following electronic devices unless the possession is prohibited by the presiding judge or justice:
 - a. A cell phone,
 - b. A laptop or tablet computer, with or without video or audio capabilities,
 - c. A digital or tape audio recorder,
 - d. A personal digital assistant (PDA), with or without video or audio recording capabilities, (E) A still or video camera, and
 - e. Any other electronic device that can broadcast, record, or take photographs.
- B. All cell phones must be turned off in the courtroom. During court proceedings, all electronic devices must be put away and out of sight, unless use of the devices is authorized by the presiding judge or justice under this rule. A person may use a cell phone or other electronic device in a court facility, but not in a courtroom, to make or receive phone calls, e-mails, and/or text messages only.

Rule 1001: Prohibited Use of Electronic Device.

- A. A person is prohibited from using a cell phone or any other electronic device in a court facility to:
 - a. Take pictures,
 - b. Take videos,
 - c. Make sound recordings,
 - d. Broadcast sound, and
 - e. Broadcast still or moving images (video).

- B. Violating this rule may result in the device being confiscated.

Permission Required for Exception to Rule

The presiding judge or justice may make an exception to this rule. The news and educational media and others - such as a publisher, editor, reporter, or other person employed by a newspaper, magazine, news wire service, television station, or radio station who gathers, receives, or processes information for communication to the public, or an online journal in the regular business of newsgathering and disseminating news or information to the public - must request specific permission in advance to use an electronic device to record and transmit public proceedings, including real-time coverage, in Kansas courts. If permission is granted, use of the permitted electronic device must be in accordance with the following applicable conditions and procedures and such other conditions and procedures as may be required by the presiding judge or justice.

1. The privilege to photograph, record, or provide real-time coverage of court proceedings may be exercised only by those obtaining prior permission of the court. Video, photography, audio reproductions, and other electronic communications may be used only for the purpose of education or news dissemination.

2. The judge must be given at least one week's notice of the request to bring cameras, recording equipment, or other electronic communication devices into the courtroom. The judge may waive this requirement for good cause.
3. The privilege granted by this rule does not limit or restrict the judge's power, authority, or responsibility to control the proceedings before the judge. The judge's authority to disallow possession of electronic devices at a proceeding or during the testimony of a particular witness extends to any person engaging in the privilege authorized by this rule.
4. Audio pickup and audio recording of a conference between an attorney and client, or among cocounsel, counsel and opposing counsel, or among attorneys and the judge are prohibited regardless of where conducted. Photographing such a conference is not prohibited.
5. Focusing on and/or photographing materials on counsel tables or in designated areas is prohibited.
6. An individual juror may not be photographed. In a courtroom in which photography is impossible without including the jury as part of the unavoidable background, photography is permitted as long as no close-ups identify individual jurors.
7. The trial judge must prohibit the audio recording and photographing of a participant in a court proceeding if the participant so requests and (a) the participant is a victim or witness of a crime, a police informant, an undercover agent, or a relocated witness or juvenile, or (b) the hearing is an evidentiary suppression hearing, a divorce proceeding, or a case involving trade secrets. Subject to a court directive to the contrary, the news media may record and photograph a juvenile who is being prosecuted as an adult in a criminal proceeding as authorized by K.S.A. 38-2347.
8. No video, photograph, audio reproduction, or other electronic communication of a court proceeding will affect the official court record of the proceeding for purposes of appeal or otherwise.
9. An interview for broadcast or other electronic transmission may not be recorded in a hallway immediately adjacent to a courtroom entrance if a passageway is blocked or a judicial proceeding is disturbed thereby. Photographing or other recording through a window or open door of a courtroom is prohibited. Prior to rendition of the verdict, a criminal defendant may not be photographed or otherwise recorded in restraints as the defendant is being escorted to or from a court proceeding.

10. The judge may ban cameras, audio recorders, and other electronic communications devices from the entire floor on which a proceeding is conducted.
11. The chief judge must designate a coordinator or other court personnel who will work with the chief judge, the trial judge, the media, and others making a request under this rule in district court.
12. A request to photograph, record, or provide live coverage of a court proceeding must be directed to the coordinator. When more than one television station, still photographer, or audio recorder desires to cover a court proceeding, the coordinator must designate the pool photographer and audio recorder. If there is a dispute as to the pool designation or the equipment to be used, no audio or visual equipment will be permitted at the proceeding. Requests for copies of audio recordings, video, or photographs must be directed to the pool representative, who will supply copies upon request to media representatives at a price not exceeding actual cost. Pool designations are not necessary for individuals providing text accounts via approved electronic devices.
13. The trial judge will designate the location in the courtroom for the audio, video equipment, and operators. Under the general supervision of the chief justice, the clerk of the appellate courts will supervise the location of media equipment within the Supreme Court courtroom. The presiding judge of a Court of Appeals panel will supervise the location of media equipment, and personnel using the equipment, at hearings before the Court of Appeals. Equipment and operators ordinarily should be restricted to areas open to the public. The equipment and operators, however, must not impede the view of persons seated in the public area of the courtroom. Operators must occupy only the area authorized by the judge and may not move about the courtroom for picture-taking purposes during the court proceeding.
14. Media equipment must not be placed within or removed from the courtroom except prior to commencement or after adjournment of proceedings each day, or during a recess. Such equipment must not be operated in any manner that disrupts proceedings.
15. One television camera, operated by one person, and one still photographer, using not more than two cameras, are authorized in any court proceeding. The judge may authorize additional cameras or persons at the request of the coordinator. If a still camera is not manufactured for silent operation, use of a quieting device is recommended. The court may restrict operation of cameras or electronic devices which emit distracting sounds during court proceedings.
16. Only audio, visual, or electronic communications equipment that does not produce distracting light or sound may be used to cover court proceedings. An artificial lighting device may not be used in connection with any audio or visual equipment. A

modification in the lighting of a district court facility may be made only with the approval of the chief judge. Approval of other authorities may be required.

[History: New rule effective September 1, 1988; Amended and restyled rule effective October 18, 2012.]