

RULE 30. MEDIA COVERAGE OF COURTROOM PROCEEDINGS

A. Presiding Judge

1. Consistent with Rule 12 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio, requests for permission to broadcast, televise, photograph, or otherwise record court proceedings that are open to the public as provided by Ohio law, shall be made in writing to the judge presiding over the proceeding. The written application and order of the judge granting or denying such application shall be made part of the record of the proceedings.
2. Requests shall be made on a form “Application Requesting Permission to Broadcast, Televise, Photograph, or Record Courtroom Proceedings” (“Media Application”) available through the Court Administrator. Media Applications shall be made as far in advance as possible but not less than 30 minutes prior to the courtroom session to be recorded. The judge may waive advance notice for good cause.
3. Only representatives of federally licensed broadcast or cable media outlets (licensed by the Federal Communications Commission) or a member of the Associated Press, Reuters, or otherwise nationally recognized news/wire service, or local print or internet media business entities who regularly report on cases occurring in the Hamilton County Courthouse (collectively “Authorized Media Representatives”), shall be permitted to submit a Media Application.

For all other individuals or entities seeking permission to submit a Media Application as an Authorized Media Representative, the judge presiding over the proceedings may request that the Hamilton County Sheriff determine the identity of the individual or entity, the employer of the individual or entity, the IP address of any internet media, perform criminal record checks, and obtain such information as the Sheriff determines reasonably necessary to identify the individual or entity seeking permission to submit a Media Application as an Authorized Media Representative.

4. After consultation with the media, the judge shall specify the place or places in the courtroom where the operators and equipment are to be positioned.

B. Permissible Equipment and Operators

1. Use of more than one portable television, videotape or movie camera with one operator shall be allowed only with permission of the judge.
2. Not more than one still photographer shall be permitted to photograph court proceedings without permission of the judge. Still photographers shall be limited to two cameras with two lenses for each camera.

3. For radio broadcast purposes, not more than one audio system shall be permitted in court. Where available and suitable, existing audio pickup systems in the court facility shall be used by the media. If existing audio pickup systems are not available, microphones and other electronic equipment necessary for the audio pickup shall be as inconspicuous as possible but shall be visible.
4. Visible audio recording equipment may be used by news media reporters with the prior permission of the judge.
5. Arrangements between or among media for “pooling” of equipment shall be the responsibility of the media representative(s) authorized to cover the proceedings. “Pooling” arrangements are to be made outside the courtroom and without imposing on the judge or court personnel. If disputes arise over arrangements between or among media representatives, the judge may exclude all contesting representatives from the proceedings.
6. The judge shall prohibit the use of electronic or photographic equipment that produces distracting sound or light. No artificial lighting other than that normally used in the courtroom shall be employed, provided that, if the normal lighting in the courtroom can be improved without becoming obtrusive, the judge may permit the modification.
7. Still photographers and television and radio representatives shall be afforded a clear view but shall not be permitted to move about in the courtroom during court proceedings from the places where they have been positioned by the judge, except to leave or enter the courtroom.

C. Limitations

1. There shall be no audio pickup or broadcast of conferences conducted in a court facility between attorneys and clients or co-counsel or of conferences conducted at the bench between counsel and the judge.
2. The judge shall inform victims and witnesses of their right to object to being filmed, videotaped, recorded, or photographed.
3. Unless permitted by the judge, there shall be no filming, videotaping, recording, or photographing of jurors or prospective jurors. In courtrooms where the filming, videotaping, recording, or photographing of trial participants is impossible without including the jury as part of the background, it shall be permitted only when individual jurors cannot be identified. Close-ups identifying individual jurors shall be prohibited.
4. Media representatives shall not be permitted to transmit or record anything other than the court proceedings from the courtroom while the court is in session.

5. This Rule shall not be construed to grant media representatives any greater rights than permitted by law. No part of this Rule gives authority for media coverage where it is otherwise limited by these Local Rules or prohibited by law.
6. Except when expressly permitted by a Hamilton County Judge under this Rule, or Local Rule 33, electronic devices shall not be used by anyone, including Authorized Media Representatives, within any area of the Courthouse, including designated areas, to:
 - a. Take or record a photograph, video, or other visual image, or;
 - b. Record, transmit, or receive audio or sound.

D. Revocation of Permission. Upon the failure of any media representative to comply with the conditions prescribed by this rule or the judge, the judge may revoke the permission to broadcast or photograph the court proceedings.