

Rule 1910. Broadcasting in the Courtroom

Unless otherwise provided by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, judges should prohibit broadcasting, televising, recording or taking photographs in the courtroom and areas immediately adjacent thereto during sessions of court or recesses between sessions, except that a judge may authorize:

- A. the use of electronic or photographic means for the presentation of evidence, for the perpetuation of a record or for other purposes of judicial administration;
- B. the broadcasting, televising, recording, or photographing of investitive, ceremonial, or naturalization proceedings;
- C. the photographic or electronic recording and reproduction of appropriate court proceedings under the following conditions:
 - (1) the means of recording will not distract participants or impair the dignity of the proceedings; and
 - (2) the parties have consented; and the consent to being depicted or recorded has been obtained from each witness appearing in the recording and reproductions; and
 - (3) the reproduction will not be exhibited until after the proceeding has been concluded and all direct appeals have been exhausted; and
 - (4) the reproduction will be exhibited only for instructional purposes in educational institutions; or
- D. the use of electronic broadcasting, televising, recording and taking photographs in the courtroom and areas immediately adjacent thereto during sessions of court or recesses between sessions of any trial court nonjury civil proceeding, however, for the purposes of this subsection, "civil proceedings" shall not be construed to mean a support, custody or divorce proceeding. Subsection C and D shall not apply to nonjury civil proceedings as heretofore defined. No witness or party who expresses any prior objection to the judge shall be photographed nor shall the testimony of such witness or party be broadcast or telecast. Permission for the broadcasting, televising, recording and photographing of any civil nonjury proceeding shall have first been expressly granted by the judge, and under such conditions as the judge may prescribe in accordance with the guidelines contained in this rule.

Note:

Temperate conduct of judicial proceedings is essential to the fair administration of justice. The recording and reproduction of a proceeding should not distort or dramatize the proceeding.

See the Internal Operating Procedures of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania regarding broadcasting of proceedings by the Pennsylvania Cable Network.

In implementing this rule, the following guidelines shall apply:

a. Officers of Court. The judge has the authority to direct whether broadcast equipment may be taken within the courtroom. The broadcast news person should advise the tipstaff prior to the start of a court session that he or she desires to electronically record and/or broadcast live from within the courtroom. The tipstaff may have prior instructions from the judge as to where the broadcast reporter and/or camera operator may position themselves. In the absence of any directions from the judge or tipstaff, the position should be behind the front row of spectator seats by the least used aisleway or other unobtrusive but viable location.

b. Pooling. Unless the judge directs otherwise, no more than one TV camera should be taking pictures in the courtroom at any one time. Where coverage is by both radio and TV, the microphones used by TV should also serve for radio and radio should be permitted to feed from the TV sound system. Multiple radio feeds, if any, should be provided by a junction box outside of the courtroom, such as in the adjacent public hallway. It should be the responsibility of each broadcast news representative present at the opening of each session of court to achieve an understanding with all other broadcast representatives as to who will function at any given time, or, in the alternative, how they will pool their photographic coverage. This understanding should be reached outside the courtroom and without imposing on the judge or court personnel.

Broadcast coverage outside the courtroom should be handled with care and discretion, but need not be pooled.

c. Broadcast Equipment. All running wires used should be securely taped to the floor. All broadcasting equipment should be handled as inconspicuously and quietly as reasonably possible. Sufficient file and/or tape capacities should be provided to obviate film and/or tape changes except during court recess. No camera should give any indication of whether it is or is not operating, such as the red light on some studio cameras. No additional lights should be used without the specific approval of the presiding judge, and then only as he may specifically approve.

d. Decorum. Broadcast representatives' dress should not set them apart unduly from other trial spectators. Camera operators should not move tripod-mounted cameras except during court recesses. All broadcast equipment should be in place and ready to function no less than five minutes before the beginning of each session of court.