



Rockwall County Texas

382nd Judicial District
439th Judicial District
County Court at Law # 1 & # 2
Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1
Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2
Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3
Justice of the Peace, Precinct 4

Audio/Video/Media in Rockwall County Courthouse

The purpose of this Order is to update and refine the existing original Media Coverage Guidelines ordered on March 9, 2012, in order to continue the efficient and secure operation of the Courts.

- A. Unless authorized under Section D herein, cameras and other recording equipment may not be brought onto any court floor of the Rockwall County Courthouse and are allowed only in the outside, designated public covered area on the first floor of the courthouse near the main entry way. A court floor is defined as any floor of a building on which is located a courtroom, judge's chambers, clerk's office, probation office, court conference room, jury assembly room, or any other room designated for petit or grand jury impanelment.

This Order does not prohibit possession of a cell phone in the courthouse, but it does prohibit its use as a recording device for video/audio or photographs on any court floor, except as provided herein.

- B. Interviews may only be conducted in the public covered area on the first floor outside of the front entry way of the courthouse.

No location within the courthouse on any court floor is available for video or audio recording, broadcasting, or live streaming, in any form, except for weddings, school tours, or other official ceremonies pre-authorized by courthouse security staff.

Persons shall confine interviews regarding judicial proceedings to the designated area, allowing any victims or witnesses who do not wish to be interviewed, the freedom to enter and leave the courthouse without interference.

- C. Photography or recording of jurors or even giving the appearance of doing so is strictly prohibited. No person shall broadcast or publish any written report, film, recording, videotape, photograph, audio recording or other report of any kind or character, taken or made in or out of the courtroom where the face of a juror is shown or the identity of any juror is stated or is otherwise discernable. Nothing herein shall be interpreted to prohibit a juror from voluntarily disclosing his or her identity, after the completion of such jurors term of service.
- D. Camera coverage in a courtroom is not allowed unless approved by the individual Judge of the court. If approval is granted, coverage shall be limited to those proceedings open to the public. In order to protect the attorney-client privilege and the right to effective assistance of counsel, there shall not be audio or video coverage, live streaming or broadcast of any conferences occurring between or among attorneys and their clients, or between and among attorneys, clients and the presiding officer.

When attorneys approach the bench to discuss legal issues with the judge, recording their comments is strictly prohibited.

If allowed, only one news media camera mounted on a tripod, with a single camera operator, will be permitted in the courtroom. Cameras must be placed in designated locations. Interviews in any part of the courtroom are prohibited.

- E. No auxiliary lighting, including flash bulbs, strobe lights and reflectors, may be brought in to the courtroom by members of the media.

Equipment must not be installed, moved, or removed from the courtroom while court is in session. Camera operators may not move around in the courtroom while court is in session.

All floor cables must be taped down with cloth gaffer's tape. Tape should not be placed on walls or paneling. All tape applied should be removed after the proceeding. Tape on the floor must not create a safety hazard.

Any cell phone, tablet or computer or other similar electronic devices taken into the courtroom must be deactivated, except those devices operated by attorneys or court personnel who have active cases in the court. No recordings of any court proceedings can be made with such device.

- F. All persons engaged in coverage permitted by these guidelines should avoid any conduct or appearance which could distract from the dignity of the proceeding.
- G. All persons including the media will be subject to the same security measures required of the public when entering the secured area of the courthouse.
- H. To insure continued efficient and orderly operation of the Courts, violations of these rules should be reported to and handled by courthouse security personnel. Violations of these rules may also be subject to punishment for contempt of court.

So ORDERED THIS 18th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2019.

Original Signed by Brett Hall

Brett Hall, Judge
382nd Judicial District Court

Original Signed by Jack James

Jack James, Judge
Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1

Original Signed by David E. Rakow

David E. Rakow, Judge
439th Judicial District Court

Original Signed by Cathy Penn

Cathy Penn, Judge
Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2

Original Signed by J. Brian Williams

J. Brian Williams, Judge
County Court at Law No 1 & 2

Original Signed by Mark Russo

Mark Russo, Judge
Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3

Original Signed by Liana Whitten

Liana Whitten, Judge
Justice of the Peace, Precinct 4