

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT

PROTOCOL FOR THE NEWS MEDIA REGARDING REQUESTS FOR ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO THE SEVEN JUSTICE COURTROOM

Jennifer Donahue, Public Information Officer
(617) 557-1113

Francis V. Kenneally, Clerk
(617) 557-1188

The following provides a protocol for use by the news media for electronic access to the Seven Justice Courtroom (courtroom). The protocol is designed to balance the need to provide access to the courtroom with the desire to maintain the appropriate decorum in the courtroom. The protocol is intended to be read in conjunction with Supreme Judicial Court Rule 1:19, as amended, 461 Mass. 1301 (2012).

When news media registered with the Public Information Office make a request pursuant to Rule 1:19 to the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for the Commonwealth for electronic access to oral argument in the courtroom, the Clerk is authorized to allow use of the following:

1. one stationary, mechanically silent, video camera for broadcast television;
2. a second stationary, mechanically silent, video camera designated for Web use; and
3. a third mechanically silent photographic camera in an area designated for still photography.

News media should request authorization for electronic access from the Clerk before 4 P.M. on the day before oral argument.¹ Except as provided below, all stationary cameras must be set up before the start of the court session and dismantled only during a court break. If the case of interest is scheduled for argument prior to the morning break, the news media are required to set up by 8:45 A.M. and shall remove all equipment during the morning break or at the end of arguments for the day. If the case is scheduled at a time that typically follows the morning break, then equipment may be set up quickly during the break and then removed after the conclusion of the arguments for the day. Movement or removal of equipment will not be permitted during oral argument under any circumstances.

¹ If a request is made after 4 P.M. the day before argument, the Clerk has discretion to deny the request if there is not sufficient time to make the requisite adjustments to the courtroom calendar or to ensure appropriate courtroom decorum.

The camera location will be identified by a temporary marker on the floor in the courtroom (a small piece of tape which will designate the only approved camera location in the courtroom). Audio recording may be taken from a stick microphone or from the camera's audio system. At times, a reporter's smartphone may be utilized as the "pool" camera for the internet video and/or still photography. On those occasions, any reporter utilizing a "pool" smartphone shall be located adjacent to the still camera location.