

COURTROOM DECORUM

The purpose of these guidelines is to state, for the guidance of counsel, certain basic principles concerning courtroom decorum. The requirements stated are minimal, not all-inclusive, and are intended to supplement, not supplant or limit, the ethical obligations of counsel under the Code of Professional Responsibility or the time honored customs of experienced trial counsel.

When appearing in this Court, all counsel (including where the context applies, all persons at counsel table) shall abide by the following:

1. Stand at the lectern while examining any witness; except that counsel may approach the Clerk's desk or the witness for the purposes of handling or tendering exhibits.
2. Stand at or in the vicinity of the lectern while making opening statements or closing arguments, except to refer to exhibits.
3. Address all remarks to the Court, not to opposing counsel.
4. Avoid disparaging personal remarks or acrimony toward opposing counsel and remain detached from any ill-feeling between the litigants or witnesses.
5. Do not address jurors by name nor approach the jury box.
6. Refer to all persons, including witnesses, other counsel and the parties by their surnames and not by their first or given names.
7. Only one attorney for each party shall examine, or cross-examine each witness. The attorney stating objections, during direct examination, shall be the attorney recognized for cross-examination.

8. Only one attorney for each party shall present oral argument on motions, opening statements, or closing arguments, although separate motions, the opening statement, or closing argument may be divided among counsel if a party has more than one trial counsel.

9. Counsel should request permission before approaching the bench or a witness. Any documents counsel wish to have the Court examine should be handed to the Clerk.

10. Any paper exhibit not previously marked for identification should first be handed to the Clerk to be marked before it is tendered to a witness for examination; and any exhibit offered in evidence should, at the time of such offer, be handed to opposing counsel.

11. Exhibits should be moved into evidence after the foundation is laid. Do not wait until the close of your case to move the admission of exhibits.

12. No speaking objections. In making objections, counsel should state only the legal grounds for the objection and should withhold all further comment or argument unless elaboration is requested by the Court.

13. In examining a witness, counsel shall not repeat, comment on, or echo the answer given by the witness.

14. Offers of, or requests for, a stipulation should be made to opposing counsel, not within the hearing of the jury.

15. In opening statements and in arguments to the jury, counsel shall not express personal knowledge or personal opinion concerning any matter in issue.

16. Counsel shall admonish all persons at counsel table and parties present in the courtroom that gestures, facial expressions, laughing, snickering, audible comments, or other manifestations of approval, disapproval or disrespect during the testimony of witnesses are prohibited.