

**RULES OF PRACTICE
OF THE
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Delay in criminal and civil cases in the Courts of Common Pleas throughout the state of Ohio is a serious problem in the administration of justice. Constitutional courts were created to serve the litigants and the interest of the public at large, not for the convenience or benefit of judges and lawyers. Unnecessary delay erodes the public's confidence in the judicial system.

It is the obligation of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas, Franklin County, Ohio, to operate the Court in a manner that is lawful, fair, just, and efficient for the benefit of the citizens of Franklin County and all other litigants that come before it. To that end, the following rules are designed (1) to expedite the disposition of both criminal and civil cases in this Court, while at the same time safeguarding the rights of litigants to the just processing of their cases; (2) to expedite and make consistent the disposition of cases in the general branch of the Court; and (3) to serve the public interest which mandates the prompt disposition of all cases before this Court.

**RULE 101 - BROADCASTING, TELEVISION, AND RECORDING COURT
PROCEEDINGS**

Broadcasting, televising, recording, and photographing by news media during courtroom sessions, including recesses between sessions, shall be permitted under the following conditions:

101.01 Administration

A. Requests for permission to broadcast, televise, record, or photograph in the courtroom shall be in writing to the Administrative Director as far in advance as reasonably practical, but in no event later than 1 hour prior to the courtroom session to be broadcast or photographed unless otherwise permitted by the Trial Judge. Request forms may be obtained from the Administrative Director's office. For the purposes of this rule only, the phrase "Trial Judge" includes Magistrates.

The Administrative Director shall immediately inform the Trial Judge of the request. The Trial Judge shall grant the request in writing consistent with Canon 3(A)(c), Code of Judicial Conduct, Superintendence Rule 11, and this rule. Written permission shall be made a part of the record of the proceeding.

101.02 Pooling. Arrangements shall be made between or among media for "pooling" equipment and personnel authorized by this rule to cover the court sessions. Such arrangements are to be made outside the courtroom and without imposing on the Trial Judge or court personnel to mediate any dispute as to the appropriate media "pool" representative or equipment authorized to cover a particular session.

101.03 Equipment and Personnel

A. Not more than one portable camera (television, video-tape, or movie), operated by not more than one in-court camera person, shall be permitted without authorization of the Trial Judge.

B. Not more than one still photographer, utilizing not more than two still cameras of professional quality with not more than two lenses for each camera, shall be permitted without authorization of the Trial Judge.

C. Not more than one audio system for radio broadcast purposes shall be permitted without authorization of the Trial Judge.

D. If audio arrangements cannot be reasonably made in advance, the Trial Judge may permit one audio tape recorder at the bench which will be activated prior to commencement of the courtroom session.

E. Visible audio tape recorders may not be used by the news media without prior permission of the Trial Judge.

101.04 Light and Sound Criteria

A. Only professional quality telephonic, photographic, and audio equipment which does not produce distracting sound or light shall be employed to cover courtroom sessions. No motor-driven still cameras shall be permitted.

B. No artificial lighting device other than that normally used in the courtroom shall be employed. However, if the normal lighting in the courtroom can be improved without becoming obtrusive, the Trial Judge may permit modification.

C. Audio pickup by microphone for all media purposes shall be accomplished from existing audio systems present in the courtroom. Microphones shall be located only at the Trial Judge's bench, witness stand, and jury rail. Microphones shall be visible, secured, but unobtrusive. If no technically suitable audio system exists in the courtroom, microphones and related wiring essential for all media purposes shall be unobtrusive and located in places designated by this rule, or the Trial Judge, in advance of any session.

101.05 Location of Equipment and Personnel

A. One television camera shall be positioned on a tripod adjacent to the side conference room door in each courtroom, and shall remain fixed in that position. This designated area shall provide reasonable access to coverage. Videotape-recording equipment or other technical equipment which is not a component part of an in-court television or broadcasting unit shall be located in a room adjacent to or outside of the Courtroom.

B. The television, broadcast, and still-camera operators shall position themselves in a location in the courtroom, either standing or sitting, and shall assume a fixed position within that area. Having established themselves in a shooting position, they shall act so as not to call attention to themselves through further movement. Sudden moves, pans, tilts, or zooms by television or still camera operators are prohibited. Operators shall not be permitted to move about in order to obtain photographs or broadcasts of courtroom sessions, except to leave or enter the courtroom.

C. Television cameras, microphones, and taping equipment shall not be placed in, moved during, or removed from the courtroom except prior to commencement or after adjournment of the session or during a recess. Neither television-tape magazines, rolls or lenses, still-camera film, nor audio tape cassettes shall be changed within a courtroom except during a recess.

101.06 Miscellaneous

A. Proper courtroom decorum shall be maintained by all media pool participants.

B. All media representatives shall be properly attired, in a manner that reflects positively upon the journalistic profession.

101.07 Limitations

A. There shall be no audio pickup or broadcast of conferences conducted in a courtroom between counsel and clients, co-counsel, or the Trial Judge and counsel.

B. The Trial Judge shall prohibit photographing or televising by any means victims of sexual assaults and undercover police officers. The Trial Judge shall retain discretion to limit or prohibit photographic or televising of any juror, victim, witness, or counsel or his or her work product, upon objection.

101.08 Revocation of Permission. Upon the failure of any media representative to comply with the conditions prescribed by the Trial Judge, the Rules of Superintendence of the Supreme Court, or this rule, the Trial Judge may revoke the permission to broadcast, photograph, or record the trial or hearing.