

Oceana County Courts

Court Security & Etiquette

COURTHOUSE SECURITY

The entrances to the Oceana County Building are monitored by security equipment and security personnel.

The following items may not be brought into the buildings: guns, knives (including small pocket knives), razors, scissors, box cutters, any type of spray, and food/beverages (except for identified jurors and staff). All packages may be inspected. Dangerous or illegal objects may be seized.

Litigants should arrive early for court proceedings to allow time for security measures.

The following items are prohibited in the courtrooms:

- Weapons of any sort
- Electronic equipment (unless approved by the court)
- Inappropriate attire, such as t-shirts with swear words, depicting violence or sexual acts, promoting drug or alcohol use; muscle shirts; tank tops; halter tops; shorts; cut-off jeans; baggy pants that fall below the hips; micro-mini skirts; pants with holes; pajamas; hats (except those worn for religious purposes)
- Food, beverages, chewing gum, tobacco
- Newspapers
- Noise – this includes noisy children

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. The court bailiff may remove offenders from the building and judges may hold violators in contempt of court.

Cell Phones:

Cell phones must be placed on silent mode, unless otherwise instructed at entry to the courthouse. **Use of cell phones are not allowed in the courtrooms or hearing rooms.** Use of cell phones in other areas of the courthouse is permitted unless a restriction notice is posted. **Users should exercise discretion in their conversations being held in a public environment.**

Persons with Pacemakers and Medical Devices:

For your safety, it is recommended that you not go through the metal detector or be exposed to the hand-held wand without a doctor's approval.

COURTROOM ETIQUETTE

Prohibited in the Courtrooms:

- weapons of any sort
- electronic devices (unless approved by the court)
- inappropriate attire, such as t-shirts with swear words, depicting violence or sexual acts, promoting drug or alcohol use; muscle shirts; tank tops; halter tops; shorts; cut-off jeans; baggy pants that fall below the hips; micro-mini skirts; pants with holes; pajamas; hats (except those worn for religious purposes)
- food, beverages, chewing gum, tobacco
- newspapers
- Noise - **Silence is Mandatory**. Court proceedings must be electronically recorded. Therefore, silence is a necessity, unless you are a party to the proceeding that is in progress. Disruptive behavior such as talking, laughing, shouting or creating other loud disturbances will not be tolerated. The security staff may remove offenders from the building and the judges may hold violators in contempt of court. Mild-toned conversations may be conducted in the lobbies, hallways and conference rooms. We strongly discourage bringing young children to court.

Use of Portable Electronic Devices in Oceana County Courts:

Use of portable electronic devices in Oceana County Courts are controlled by. MCR 8.115; AO No. 1989-1.

A portable electronic device is defined as any type of portable device used for communication or personal information (examples: cell phones, pagers, computers, text messaging devices, music devices, internet devices, recorders)

- A. Electronic devices may not be used in courtrooms or hearing rooms unless otherwise approved by the hearing official.
- B. No photographs may be taken in the courtroom/hearing room without the prior permission of the hearing official. No photographs may be taken of any juror or witness. Requests by representatives of media agencies for such coverage must be made in writing to the clerk of the particular court not less than three business days before the proceeding is scheduled to begin.
- C. No one may photograph, record, broadcast, or live stream any juror or anyone called to the court for jury service.
- D. In areas of a courthouse other than courtrooms, no one may photograph, record, broadcast, or live stream an individual without that individual's prior express consent.
- E. Failure to comply with this policy may result in a fine, including confiscation of the device, incarceration, or both, for contempt of court.

- F. Cell phones, pagers and other types of electronic communication devices may be brought into the courthouse and placed in silent mode, unless otherwise instructed by security personnel at entry to the courthouse. These devices may be used in corridors and lobbies unless otherwise directed by court or security personnel. **Users should exercise discretion in their conversations being held in a public environment.**

EXCEPTIONS:

- A. Attorneys and pro per parties are permitted to use portable electronic devices in the courtrooms, however hearing officials retain discretion to have them removed from the courtroom if their use interferes with court proceedings.
- B. Media representatives with an approved, active Request and Notice for Film and Electronic Media Coverage of Court Proceedings may use electronic devices pursuant to AO, court rules, and Request and Notice for Film and Electronic Media Coverage of Court Proceedings.

Addressing the Court:

Address the judge or referee as "Your Honor" or "Judge."

Stand when addressing the court. Please advise the judge or referee if you have a disability that would make this difficult.

Only one person at a time may speak during a court proceeding. This ensures greater accuracy in making a record by audio and video recording equipment.

Speak clearly and loudly. The courtrooms absorb sound, making it difficult to hear mumbling and soft spoken voices. Speaking clearly and loudly ensures the judge and the court recorder/recording equipment are hearing what is being said.

Address the court either from a counsel table or from a podium. These areas are equipped with microphones. Stepping away from these areas reduces the accuracy of the record.

Respect:

Be respectful of the judge or referee, the court staff, attorneys and litigants. Maintain a respectful attitude at all times in the building and courtroom.

References:

Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct (MRPC)
Michigan Code of Judicial Conduct - Canon 3A2
AO No. 1989-1 Film or Electronic Media Coverage of Court Proceedings
MCR 8.115 Courtroom Decorum; Policy Regarding Use of Cell Phones or Other
Portable Electronic Communication Devices