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JUDGE

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Media and Spectators Policy

The following policy is adopted by the Waller County Court At Law for attorneys, spectators, interested parties, bystanders and media attending proceedings of the Waller County Court At Law. As used in these rules, proceedings include all matters pertaining to the administration, operation and function of the Waller County Court At Law, including but not limited to civil and criminal hearings, jury and non-jury trials, and proceedings and operations within the Chambers of the Waller County Court At Law. Requests for waivers to this Policy may be presented by application in writing directly to the Judge of the Waller County Court At Law at least seven days prior to the date of the event for which a waiver is requested.

The term courtroom refers to the district courtroom, commissioner's courtroom or such other room or facility as may be used for court purposes.

The following Policy is hereby adopted:

1. The courtroom, the floor of the courthouse containing the courtroom, the stairways and the elevator to and from the courtroom floor are designated as protected areas and are subject to this Policy. Further, the Court Chambers and offices of the District Clerk and the County Clerk are designated protected areas.
2. Firearms are allowed only in accordance with current state law and county ordinance or regulation concerning their use and possession within the courthouse, and not otherwise.
3. The use of binoculars, cameras, recording equipment, or any type of electronic equipment, except as specifically authorized by this Policy, is strictly prohibited in the courtroom.

4. No cellular phones, pagers or other wireless devices not associated with the court proceedings are allowed to be turned on or used inside the courtroom while any hearing, proceeding or trial is being conducted. Laptop computers that are not connected to the courtroom wireless internet, and the switches of which are set to mute, may be used for the taking of personal notes of the events taking place in the courtroom. Web-cameras are not allowed to be on during such usage.

5. Unless otherwise determined by the Court, all proceedings are open to the public except for the jury selection process. Only Court staff, courthouse employees, law enforcement officers, attorneys and their assistants associated with the court proceeding, parties to the court proceeding and potential jurors summoned by the Court shall be allowed inside the courtroom during the jury selection process. The media is allowed and welcome in all public proceedings. However, no filming or photography of any kind, including cell-phone photography, shall be allowed in protected areas at any time that court is in session. The media will be allowed to enter the courtroom for pictures and filming of the courtroom itself only with the specific consent of, and at the times provided by, this Court. This prohibition includes photography or filming directed into the courtroom from any location outside the courtroom.

6. The broadcasting or showing of any type of film, video tape or picture, or broadcasting of any recording or pictures of proceedings made in violation of this Policy is prohibited.

7. Court chambers and the anterooms of the chambers, and the court staff, may not be the subject of filming or photography of any kind, including cell-phone photography, without the specific consent of, and at the times provided by, this Court.

8. No interviews, whether oral, recorded or video-taped, shall be conducted in the courtroom or on the floors of the courthouse containing the entrances into the courtroom at any time while court is in session, or within one hour before the scheduled commencement of court and one hour after court has been adjourned.

9. All persons in the protected area, including law enforcement officers, court staff, courthouse employees, attorneys, spectators, bystanders and the media, shall conduct themselves in an orderly and quiet manner during all court proceedings.


10. At all recesses and adjournments, and any other time the jury is retiring from the courtroom, spectators shall remain quiet and in the courtroom until the jury has had ample time to withdraw and the spectators have been given permission to disperse by the Court. Spectators and others attending court, except for physical inability to do so, shall rise on entrance into the courtroom, or exit therefrom, of the Judge of the Court and the jury.

11. Jurors shall not be contacted or approached except by authorized court personnel and shall not be photographed, filmed or recorded. No personal information concerning jurors, including but not limited to home address, telephone number and other confidential information acquired during jury selection may be released or published except as provided by Art. 35.29 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. Prohibitions against such contact shall exist throughout the course of a trial, including while jurors are off-site, at home or traveling to and from court, and shall continue until the jurors have been released by the Court.

12. Entrances and corridors in the protected areas of the courthouse are to be kept clear at all times. Noise and conversation in the hallways leading to the courtroom shall be muted and dignified so that the sound will not carry into the courtroom or otherwise disturb the due order of proceedings.

13. This Policy shall be posted near the door of the courtroom and copies made available through the Office of the Waller County Court At Law Judge, the Office of the County Clerk or the Office of the District Clerk.

14. This Policy is subject to amendment.


Carol A. Chaney
Presiding Judge