

IN THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 1.991(B)

MEDIA COVERAGE OF JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS

WHEREAS, Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.450 sets the standards for conduct and technology governing electronic media and still photography coverage of judicial proceedings; and

WHEREAS, the court must balance the constitutional right to a free press with the constitutional right to a fair trial, and the need to protect citizens from unwanted contact with the press; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to establish uniform guidelines, in combination with Rule 2.450, regarding media coverage of court proceedings within the Eighth Judicial Circuit in order to ensure the efficient and proper administration of justice and to maintain the dignity of the court; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Judge, as the leading administrative officer of the Circuit, has inherent power to control the court facilities; now

THEREFORE, it is hereby

ORDERED that:

GENERAL RULES

1. All persons who enter the courthouses and courthouse facilities located in the Eighth Judicial Circuit shall comply with the requirements of Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.450. Videographers, photographers, news reporters, and other media personnel shall not obstruct the points of ingress into or egress out of the courthouses and courthouse facilities located in the Eighth Judicial Circuit, and they shall not obstruct or impede, in any way, the progress of persons on their way into, out of, or within the courthouses and courthouse facilities in the Eighth Judicial Circuit. Such courthouses and courthouse facilities include courtrooms, judicial offices, interior hallways, stairs, and passageways, and exterior stairs and passageways located at:

Alachua County Courthouse Family and Civil Justice Center
201 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida

Alachua County Courthouse Criminal Justice Center
220 South Main Street
Gainesville, Florida

Baker County Courthouse
339 East Macclenny Avenue
Macclenny, Florida

Bradford County Courthouse
945 North Temple Avenue
Starke, Florida

Gilchrist County Courthouse
112 South Main Street
Trenton, Florida

Levy County Courthouse
355 South Court Street
Bronson, Florida

Union County Courthouse
55 West Main Street
Lake Butler, Florida

2. Media representatives who plan to film or photograph a court event in any of the courthouses located in the Eighth Judicial Circuit are directed to contact the Public Information Officer of the Eighth Judicial Circuit at (352) 337-6277 at least twenty-four hours in advance of the judicial proceeding they wish to film for instructions regarding entry into the courthouse, equipment set-up, and courtroom decorum. If circumstances prohibit twenty-four hour notice, media should telephone the Public Information Officer as far in advance of the court event as is possible.

3. Photographing, video-recording, and broadcasting are permitted in specific areas of each courthouse.

A. In the Alachua County Criminal Justice Center, on-camera interviews may be

conducted on the first floor of the courthouse in the public foyer along the west wall near the front entrance; in the public foyer area on the second and third floors at the southernmost section of the hallway near the public telephones; and other areas as may be designated by the presiding judge or the Chief Judge. In the Alachua County Family and Civil Justice Center, on-camera interviews may be conducted in the public foyer near the east windows on the first floor.

B. In all courthouses of the Eighth Judicial Circuit, all interviews must be conducted in public foyers, away from the entry into the courtrooms or hearing rooms, in order to avoid the violation of witness sequestration orders.

JUDICIAL DISCRETION

4. The Chief Judge has inherent authority to control the courthouse hallways, courtrooms, and court space which are essential to secure and safeguard free exercise of the court's functions.

5. The presiding judge has the authority to use his or her sound discretion to establish additional rules relating to courtroom decorum, modify the standards established by Rule 2.450 relating to media coverage of courtroom proceedings, or to modify any of the courtroom rules as outlined below.

6. Judges contacted by the media may redirect the media representatives to the Public Information Officer of the Eighth Judicial Circuit at (352) 337-6277.

MEDIA EQUIPMENT IN THE COURTROOMS

7. Media representatives are required to know and comply with the standards established under Rule 2.450.

8. No member of the media is permitted beyond the bar at any time.

9. Media representatives must arrange among themselves pool access through one video camera and no more than two still cameras. In the absence of any pooling agreement, the Public Information Officer will have the discretion to allow videotaping by the first media agency representative who contacts him or her and requests courtroom access. All recording and broadcasting equipment located in a courtroom shall remain turned off until court is in session.

10. The video camera shall be located in the gallery on the same side of the courtroom as the jury box. The still camera photographer(s) shall be stationed in the front row of the gallery.

11. Media representatives must set up all equipment during times when court is not in session, and equipment must remain in place while court is in session in order to avoid disrupting the proceedings. Equipment may be removed when the court is in recess or has been adjourned.

ELECTRONIC RECORD

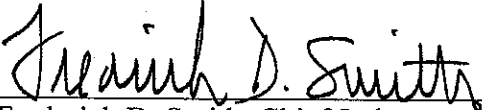
12. Supreme Court of Florida Amended Administrative Order No. AOSC06-21 imposes a limited moratorium on the release of electronic court records, including audio and video recording, analog or digital. The media may request and obtain the transcription of an official court record at their expense by contacting the Court Reporting Department at 352-384-3080.

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

13. Any violation of the foregoing, and any conduct that the court finds to be disruptive to court proceedings, may result in an order of temporary or permanent exclusion of the offender, or the media organization represented by the offender, from the remainder of the proceeding, or other appropriate sanctions, including but not limited to a finding of contempt of court.

14. This order supersedes Administrative Order No. 1.991(A) titled "Media Coverage of Judicial Proceedings" dated 23 January 2007.

ORDERED on 19 June 2009.



Frederick D. Smith, Chief Judge