

Few Basic Federal Court Etiquette and Procedures For the General Public

Description

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The Federal Supreme Court has issued a directive namely Federal Courts Courtroom Etiquettes Directive No 13/2022. The Directive aims to put court rooms as formal places that require a certain high standard of behavior from those that visit the court and the courtroom. The Directive will be enforced after three months from May 16,2022. Here are few of the etiquettes enlisted in the Directive.

Pre-courtroom Procedure:

- When arriving at the courthouse, check the daily hearing list for the courtroom. The checklist shall contain the file number, name of the parties, the type of case, reason for the adjournment and time. Such a checklist shall be posted on notice board or can be seen on television screen. The Directive lacks to indicate what to do if the matter in which you are interested is not on the list. Normally clients will ask a member of the court staff to direct them to the counter where someone can look up where and when the matter is being heard.
- Be on time. Because people entering and exiting the courtroom can be very distracting, you may be required to wait outside of the courtroom until an appropriate break in the proceedings opens up so that you may go inside the courtroom.
- When the courtroom is open, please find a seat in the gallery. Standing is generally not permitted in courtrooms.
- When the judge enters the courtroom, everyone in the room must rise to show respect. Please rise and remain standing until the bailiff or court room assistant invites you to be seated.
- Before arriving at the courthouse, make sure you do not have any pocket or utility knives or anything else that may be considered a weapon. These items may be confiscated, and you may be denied entry into the courthouse.

Inside the courtroom:

- Courts shall start in the morning at 9:30AM and in the afternoon at 2:00 PM. However, the Directive lacks to mention the existence of lunch break, as well as a morning and an afternoon break. Probably the timing of these breaks are left for the discretion of the judge.
- The judge entertains cases as per the case flow management directive. The checklist is not the governing sequence of how cases are heard one after the other. The Directive needs to include to show consistency as to time of adjournment and case flow management of the judge, so that customers know as per the sequence on the checklist, their case shall be called.
- Turn off your cell phone or pager before entering the courtroom. Members of the public are not permitted to use electronic devices (e.g. cell phones, cameras, recording devices etc.) in courtrooms unless the presiding judge orders otherwise. The use of electronic devices in the courtroom to Counsel, parties, and members of the media subject to certain conditions and

restrictions shall be subject to the order of the judge..

- Speak in a voice audible for the judge, the courtroom or the opposing party or council.
- Proper dressing attire has to be followed. The dressing code has to be formal rather than casual. It is forbidden to wear a clothing that depicts criminal conduct or contain offensive writings or posts that can negatively influence the court proceedings.
- Remain silent throughout the proceedings. If you need to speak to someone, please step outside the courtroom.
- No food or beverages are allowed in the courtrooms except water..
- Hats or headwear are not permitted except for religious reasons. Please also remove your sunglasses before entering the courtroom (unless they are required due to a medical condition).
- You must stand whenever you speak to the judge or the judge speaks to you.
- When you are addressing a judge, you should call him or her “Your Honor Judge” or “Honorable Court”.
- Do not sit in a manner that forbids movement for others by stretching your legs, sitting on a table or places used to block movement to the stage of the judge.
- It is prohibited to be intoxicated or be under the influence of drugs and enter the courtroom.
- Those who have cough or flu need to wait outside till their name is called or ask permission to be given priority.
- Do not interrupt the judge while he/she is speaking.
- Do not interrupt to go out while the judge is reading charge, sentencing, judgment, decree or hearing of witnesses.

In General the judge or court staff are responsible for maintaining security and decorum in the courtroom. One has to comply with any direction that the judge courtroom staff give you. If you fail to comply with any such direction, you may be asked to leave the courtroom.

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