



## **Sacramento Superior Court Media Access Policy**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish protocols with regards to print and broadcast coverage of the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento. For media protocols relating to the coverage of juvenile proceedings please refer to Local Rule, Chapter 6- Juvenile Court Confidentiality and Media Policies.

### **II. INTRODUCTION**

One of the goals of the Sacramento Superior Court is to establish and sustain a collaborative partnership with the community and the news media to assist them in understanding the functions of the judicial process, including:

- To assist the media and public in maintaining their basic right of access to civil and criminal proceedings;
- To educate and inform the public about the role and function of the court and the legal system;
- To establish a communications structure to inform the public about court-related developments;
- To ensure fair, complete and accurate reporting on the courts;
- To assist news media representatives in carrying out their responsibilities to inform the public; and
- To accommodate media coverage with the least disruption to court proceedings.

### **III. MEDIA CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Court's Public Information Office may be contacted at 916-591-0050 or by email at [SSCPIO@saccourt.ca.gov](mailto:SSCPIO@saccourt.ca.gov). Additional media information may be found at the court's website: <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/indexes/media.aspx>.

### **IV. ACCESS TO RECORDS**

One of the policies of the Sacramento Superior Court is to provide appropriate information in a timely manner and to assure appropriate access to records. Most court records are open and are available to the public and media. Summary case information is provided in the Court's Public Case Access System and available on the court's website at:

<https://services.saccourt.ca.gov/PublicCaseAccess/>.

Some case files may contain sealed documents or references to documents that are not otherwise open to the public. Access to the sealed documents within court records requires an order from the court. If you believe that you have been denied access to documents that should be open to the public, please contact the Court Executive Office and/or the Public Information Office immediately so that we may respond to your concerns.

## **V. PHOTOGRAPHING, RECORDING, OR BROADCASTING INSIDE THE COURTROOM**

Pursuant to California Rule of Court, Rule 1.150, media requests to photograph, video/audio record, and broadcast civil and criminal court proceedings, which may include pooled coverage, filming while court is not in session and use of electronics are at the discretion of the judicial officer presiding over the proceeding.

### **1. Procedure to File Request to Photograph, Record, and Broadcast**

The Judicial Council forms, MC-500, *Media Request to Photograph, Record, or Broadcast* and MC-510 *"Order on Media Request to Permit Coverage"* are available on the court's web site at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/indexes/media.aspx> A Rule 1.150 request and order may be filed by email at [SSCPIO@saccourt.ca.gov](mailto:SSCPIO@saccourt.ca.gov).

### **2. Timeliness of Filing Request**

The request form, along with a completed, signed order shall be filed at least five court days before the portion of the proceeding to be covered, unless good cause is shown. Good cause is considered for the initial hearing in a criminal case given the short timeline within which the case is filed (See California Rule of Court, 1.150 (e)(1)).

## **VI. PHOTOGRAPHING, RECORDING, OR BROADCASTING OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM**

Special requests to film jury rooms or employee work areas in the court shall follow the same procedures outlined in Section V- *Photographing, Recording, or Broadcasting Inside the Courtroom*. All such requests shall be directed to the Sacramento Superior Court Public Information Office and the Court Executive Office. The request shall include the time estimate for filming. Time estimates will be enforced. Work area is defined as a non-public area of the courthouse where employees are performing their job functions.

Television and still photographers may film in public areas of the courthouse, so long as they are not impeding the conduct of court business. It is the intent of the court to protect the privacy of its employees and those members of the public using court services; therefore, media representatives shall use reasonable efforts to notify the Public Information Office of their intent to photograph, record, or broadcast.

## **VII. OBSTRUCTION OF TRAFFIC DUE TO MEDIA**

At no time shall any grouping of people in any hallway, entrance or exit become so large as to obstruct pedestrian traffic. On occasion, the media and public interest in court proceedings is so great as to produce disruptive conditions of noise and crowding in and around court facilities which impedes access to the court and impairs the ability of the court to discharge its functions. Pursuant to California Rules of Court, 1.150(e)(4), the Presiding Judge may issue a standing order that will assist the Judicial Officers to limit the occupancy of the public corridors in court facilities immediately adjacent thereto, to limit disruption to the court. Before limiting the activities of members of the news media within the courthouse, or in the areas immediately adjacent to the court building, the court shall give notice as is practical to identifiable news media members who may be affected by an order under this section of the policy, and offer them an opportunity to make a showing that the proposed order is unnecessary, or should be modified. Nothing in this section of the policy is intended to impact the procedures established in the California Rules of Court, Rule 1.150. Any party aggrieved by an order made pursuant to this section of the policy may apply to the court to modify the order, or to be exempted from it, by making a request in writing to the judge who issued the order, or to the Presiding Judge, if the judge who issued the order is not available.

## **VIII. RESPONSIBILITY FOR RULES**

Each media agency shall be responsible for ensuring that all of its media personnel who cover the court proceeding know of and follow the provisions of this policy, Rule 1.150 of the California Rules of Court, and any applicable court orders.

Pursuant to California Rules of Court, Rule 1.150(f), a violation of this rule or an order made under this rule is an unlawful interference with the proceedings of the court and may be the basis for an order terminating media coverage, admonishment, an order to destroy all recordings or photographs, and/or findings of willful disobedience of the rule or policy and contempt of court under Code of Civil Procedure section 1209(a)(5) or arrest pursuant to Penal Code section 166(a)(4). or other sanctions as provided by law.

## **IX. MEDIA INQUIRIES**

The Public Information Office and Court Executive Office respond to inquiries from the media. Facts are gathered as quickly as possible and provided to the inquirer, as appropriate. If the requested facts are not known, are not appropriate for release, or are otherwise unavailable, the inquirer will be informed of such.

The court is not allowed to make any public statement on any pending matter before this court.