

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PUBLIC

Purpose

To accomplish the D.C. Courts' mission to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly and effectively, the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration has established the following standard:

All persons who conduct business in court buildings are expected to behave and dress in a manner that reflects the seriousness of and respect for judicial proceedings. Persons exhibiting behavior or attire that distracts from the orderliness of court proceedings or that is threatening or contrary to the civility and dignity of the D.C. Courts and its work, may be excluded from the courthouse and its courtrooms.

Behavior, Decorum and Civility

Court participants are expected to be civil to all. The following behavior is inappropriate in the D.C. Courts' buildings:

- Disorderly, disruptive or indecent conduct of any nature;
- Shouting, arguing, or abusive or aggressive language;
- Obscene or offensive gestures or taunting of others, including horseplay or fighting;
- Running, loitering, or defacing court property, including spitting or littering.

Dress

The District of Columbia Courts respect individual styles and fashion. However, certain attire is not suitable when conducting business or visiting the court because it distracts from the orderliness of court proceedings, is threatening, or is contrary to the civility and dignity of the judicial branch. Persons wearing inappropriate attire may be excluded from the courthouse and its courtrooms. Inappropriate attire includes, but is not limited to: gang paraphernalia and insignia; exposed undergarments; clothing with words, depictions, or messages that are intimidating or obscene; clothing with sexual or drug references; and sheer, see through, or provocative clothing.

Food

Eating is prohibited in all courtrooms, corridors, and public areas of court buildings. Persons wishing to consume food may do so in the Courts' Café, located on the C Street level of the Moultrie Courthouse, or in vending rooms. Jurors can eat in the Juror's Lounge on the third floor.

Drugs and Alcohol

The use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco products or electronic smoking devices is strictly prohibited inside any court building. Smoking tobacco products or electronic smoking devices is permitted outside D.C. Courts' buildings, at least 25 feet from building entrances.

Electronics

Electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, iPads, computers) may not be used in any courtroom. Taking photographs or making audio recordings is prohibited inside all D.C. Courts' buildings. In certain instances, these activities may be permitted upon the written approval of the Courts' Executive Officer.

Weapons

No weapons of any kind are permitted in D.C. Courts' buildings. This includes firearms, tasers, mace, pepper spray, knives, scissors or any item that may be used as a weapon. Without exception, Court Security Officers will confiscate all illegal items and they will not be returned. The Courts' Weapons Policy is posted at the entrances to D.C. Courts' buildings and is available online at www.dccourts.gov.

Solicitation

Solicitation (selling items) and collection (retrieval of cash in exchange for items) are prohibited on court property and within court buildings, with the exception of any activities authorized in writing by the D.C. Courts' Executive Officer.

Animals

Animals are not allowed in any court building, with the exception of service animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Potential Penalties

Persons who violate these provisions may be subject to arrest, expulsion or may be banned from entering D.C. Courts' buildings.