

Oral Argument Protocols Division I, Court of Appeals July Term

Division I of the Washington State Court of Appeals is resuming in-person oral argument in the July term. In order to comply with government and health directives, the Court has made procedural adjustments to ensure the safety of the case participants, judges, and employees of the Court. Each case will be called individually and has been assigned a specific start time. The following protocols have been developed to facilitate a positive experience for the Court and case participants.

1. Arrive on-site 15 minutes before your assigned oral argument time. You may bring notebooks and case materials into the courtroom, but to minimize undue exposure during security screening leave any bags, purses, etc. at home or in your car. All persons entering the building will be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Check-in with Court of Appeals staff stationed outside the building upon arrival. Any observers must check-in and be assigned seating.
3. Answer screening questions accurately and honestly. Any observers must also be screened. Non-touch temperature checks will be conducted at this time.
4. Maximum of two people at counsel table. If you are not arguing or sitting at counsel table, you must be assigned seating or you will not be allowed to enter.
5. Once checked-in and screened, wait in the designated area for further instructions.
6. Case participants will be escorted into the building. Counsel shall proceed to counsel tables. Any observers shall proceed to their assigned seating areas. Everyone in the courtroom shall wear face coverings throughout the proceedings.
7. Once counsel for appellant finishes argument he/she shall return to counsel table. The courtroom bailiff will wipe down the podium prior to counsel for respondent's argument. Upon completion of argument by respondent's counsel the courtroom bailiff will wipe down the podium prior to counsel for appellant's rebuttal.
8. Once argument has concluded, case participants and observers shall immediately exit the courtroom wearing masks and observing proper social distancing. The courtroom bailiff will wipe down/sanitize both counsel tables, the podium, and hard surfaces in the gallery. The participants for the next case will be let into the building once the courtroom has been sanitized. Repeat.

Do's and Don'ts

- Don't come to argument if you are sick or have symptoms.
- Do arrive 15 minutes before your assigned argument time. Do not try to check-in early. Wear your mask at all times.
- Do wear a mask and practice proper social distancing throughout the check-in, screening, and while moving about the building/courtroom.
- Sanitize your hands once seated at counsel table. Wear your mask while at all times while in the courtroom.
- Don't bring unnecessary items to court or the podium when arguing. Avoid touching surfaces whenever possible.
- Don't touch the microphone.
- Do sanitize your hands upon returning to counsel table.
- Do encourage your staff and clients to watch the proceedings via the video stream on TVW.
- Do exit the courtroom expeditiously upon completion of argument, wearing a mask and practicing proper social distancing.