

Court-Media Relations Checklist

Cameras in Court: GR 16

Approach:

1. Presume Access
2. Give all a chance to be heard
3. Impose restrictions only if:
 - Based on a “compelling” reason
 - Drawn as narrowly as possible
 - Rooted in specific facts of case
4. Articulate your reasoning on record

General approach to press issues:

- Think first of the shared missions of the courts and the media (public education and participation);
- Stay mindful of the court’s separate goals that should not be sacrificed (fairness, truthseeking, dignity); and
- Strive to best accommodate all interests to achieve the broadest public benefit.

Access to Court Documents: GR 15

Approach:

Precisely the same 4 steps!

Closed Hearing? (Bone Club)

Approach:

Same 4 steps!

GENERAL PRESS INTERVIEW TIPS FOR JUDGES

1. Develop relationships with reporters BEFORE being in the news.
2. Always return reporters’ phone calls.
3. Be prepared for any interview. Think both about what you want to say and avoid.
4. Never say “no comment”, explain why commenting would be inappropriate.
5. Don’t go “off the record” unless you know and trust the reporter.
6. Think fast, talk slow.

Contact the Fire Brigade for assistance with courts & news media issues: firebrigade@listserv.courts.wa.gov

Fire Brigade Chief Superior Court Judge Richard Okrent richard.okrent@snoco.org (425) 388-3570

Superior Court Judge Breann Beggs bbeggs@spokanecounty.gov (509) 477-4766

Superior Court Judge Brandon Johnson bjohnson@wwcowa.gov (509) 524-2790

Superior Court Judge Robert Jourdan robert.jourdan@co.chelan.wa.us (509) 667-6210