

Rules of Decorum/Dress AND Media Policy of
Waller County Court at Law Number Two

Rule 1.1 Behavior

- 1.1.1 The Texas Lawyer's Creed shall be observed in all proceedings before the court. Counsel, litigants, witnesses, defendants and courtroom participants shall conduct themselves professionally and with the dignity and decorum expected to accompany court proceedings.
- 1.1.2 No individuals under the age of 17 are allowed in the courtroom without leave of the presiding judge.
- 1.1.3 Individuals in the gallery shall not speak or conduct conversations with anyone other than attorneys, attorneys' staff members, court staff, the presiding judge, and representatives of the various probation departments except in an emergency.
- 1.1.4 Counsel conference rooms are reserved for use by attorneys. Pro se participants should seek permission from the bailiff prior to using a counsel conference room.
- 1.1.5 Individuals in the gallery may use their cell phones in the courtroom only for reading. All cell phones must at all times be on silent or vibrate mode. No games are allowed to be played on a cell phone, tablet or similar device by individuals in the gallery or by court participants.
- 1.1.6 Individuals in the gallery are permitted to read newspapers, books, magazines and similar publications so long as the display of such articles in public is not prohibited by law, and does not conflict with the dignity and decorum expected to accompany court proceedings.
- 1.1.7 Individuals accused of a crime (hereinafter "defendants") in a case pending before the County Court at Law #2 shall arrive in the courtroom at 8:30 a.m. for all hearings, unless specifically authorized by the judge to appear at a different time. Defendants shall immediately check in with the bailiff assigned to the court on that day, and shall not leave the courthouse without permission of the bailiff. All Defendants shall sit in a designated area assigned by the bailiff and shall remain in that area unless accompanied by their attorney OR they are temporarily gone to use the restroom facilities. By remaining in a designated area

defendants will collectively help the docket move quickly and help defense attorneys more easily interact with their clients. This should not be seen as a punishment, but as a collective effort to respect each defendant's time, the court's time, and to move the docket as fairly and quickly as possible.

Rule 1.2 Dress

1.2.1 Courtroom Participants (i.e., attorneys and their staff, civil parties, and party representatives)

Courtroom participants are expected to wear appropriate business attire in the courtroom. Courtroom participants are expected to dress neatly and to exercise common sense in selecting clothing and footwear appropriate for court. Appropriate business attire generally includes the following:

1. A business suit;
2. A dress;
3. A skirt with a blouse or sweater or tailored slacks with a professional blouse; or
4. A sport coat with dress slacks, a collared dress shirt, and a tie.

Courtroom participants not wearing appropriate business attire may be excluded from participating in courtroom proceedings.

1.2.2 Courtroom Visitors/Defendants

Dress appropriately for court. DO NOT wear shorts, tank tops, sandals, flip flops, Crocks™, ball caps, or T-shirts. Compliance with the Courtroom Participant rules above is encouraged but not required. Collared shirts, slacks, nice jeans (no holes or fraying in fabric), and other business casual attire is generally acceptable.

1.2.3 The court reserves the right to exercise its judgment on the propriety of attire on a case-by-case basis and to make orders accordingly.

1.2.4 Brands/Trademarks/Slogans/Lettering/Pictures/Drawings

The courtroom is to be treated as a limited advertising zone.

Slogans/brands/lettering/trademarks/pictures/drawings that are easily visible to the naked eye shall not be exhibited. Such clothing is distracting and per se detracts from the dignity and the decorum expected in a courtroom setting and the subject matter considered therein. For example, a small one inch horse on a chest pocket would generally be acceptable. A twelve inch horse on the front or back of a shirt would not be acceptable.

Rule 1.3 Media Policy

Rule 1.3.1 Definitions

“Recording” means photographing, audio recording or visual/video recording by any means.

“Broadcasting” means disseminating or transmitting to others through newspapers, television, radio, internet, social media or other means.

“Media” means any person or organization engaging in news gathering or reporting and includes any newspaper, radio or television station or network, news service, magazine, trade paper, in-house publication, professional journal, website or other news reporting or news gathering agency, whether the information is transmitted or disseminated by broadcasting, cable, satellite, internet or other means.

“Court Proceedings” does not include investitures or ceremonial proceedings. Court proceedings includes, but is not limited to: activities, trials, hearings, sounds, images, and conversations occurring in: 1) the courtroom; 2) the jury room; 3) offices and common areas of the judge and judge’s staff; 4) the courtroom vestibule/foyer; and 5) offices set aside for use by counsel.

Rule 1.3.2 Recording or Broadcasting

Recording or broadcasting of any court proceedings is prohibited without the express permission of the presiding judge.

In the event the court allows the media to record and/or broadcast court proceedings, the court may require the media to demonstrate that their proposed equipment complies with these rules and may exclude any media from the courtroom who fail to comply with these rules. The court may specify the placement of personnel and equipment to permit reasonable coverage without disruption to the proceedings. Unless the court in its discretion orders otherwise, the following standards apply to the placement and operation of media equipment:

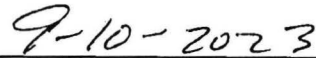
Only one television camera, one audio recording machine, and one still photographer are permitted. In appropriate circumstances, the court in its discretion may allow an unmanned second camera into the courtroom.

Effective this the 10th day of September, 2023.



Elton R. Mathis

Judge, Waller County Court at Law No. Two



September 10, 2023