



PRESS POLICY

U.S. DISTRICT COURT, DISTRICT OF MAINE

GENERAL

The U.S. District Court for the District of Maine is a public institution and all its proceedings are open to the public, unless specifically designated otherwise by a judicial officer or by statute.

The Clerk of Court and/or her designee are the Court's point of contact for the news media.

Case files, which contain docket sheets and documents filed in a case, are publicly available through [PACER](#), the federal judiciary's Public Access to Court Electronic Records system. This information may be accessed remotely, by establishing a PACER account or in person through the Clerk's Office public terminal, which is located in the Clerk's Office public lobby at the Courthouse in both Portland and Bangor. Sealed documents or sealed cases are not publicly available through PACER or at the Courthouse.

All opinions issued by judges of this court are accessible on the court's website at <http://www.med.uscourts.gov/district-court-opinions>.

Court employees follow the [Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees](#), which states: "A judicial employee should avoid making public comment on the merits of a pending or impending action and should require similar restraint by personnel subject to the judicial employee's direction and control."

Employees and representatives of the media may not conduct interviews intended for broadcast on court property, unless specifically authorized by the Clerk of Court.

Requests from sketch artists to attend and sketch a court proceeding should be made to the Clerk of Court.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

District of Maine Local Rule 83.8 (available [here](#)) prohibits “. . .the possession and use of cellular telephones or other wireless communication devices, computers and recording devices, the creation of photographs, including digital or video images, the recording or transmission of information, sound or images by any means, or the possession and use of radio, television or broadcasting equipment [on Court property]...without prior approval of the Court.”

Local Rule 83.8 further states that “parties may not use electronic devices to access the internet or electronic mail” without prior approval of the Court.

The Court may grant limited exceptions to the above rule for members of the media who possess a Press Identification Card issued by the Court. Following security screening, such individuals may bring electronic devices, such as cell phones, smart phones, personal digital assistants, tablets and laptops into the courthouse and into the courtrooms, as an exception to Local Rule 83.8 under the following rules:

1. The devices may not be used for email, text messages, twitter, and postings to a website, blog or any other transmission from inside a courtroom without express, written consent of the Court.
2. Use of electronic devices inside the courtrooms is limited to quiet note taking, word processing or accessing the internet. Only quiet keyboards may be used in the courtrooms. Electronic devices must be in silent mode with ring tones or other functional sounds disabled.
3. Transmission of data, such as documents, notes, email, text messages and postings, are permitted only from public areas in the courthouse (not including courtrooms) or from areas or conference rooms designated for use by the press. Transmission of audio or visual content from inside the courthouse is prohibited.
4. No filming, photography, visual or audio recording, transmission, use of cameras or recording devices will be permitted on Court property.
5. A presiding judge may exclude electronic devices from a particular proceeding or a portion of a particular proceeding, as he or she deems necessary in the interest of the fair administration of justice.

PRESS CREDENTIALS

Members of the media who wish to obtain a Press Identification Card must file an application and include a cover letter from the applicant's editor/news director, which states that the individual spends a substantial amount of his or her time collecting information for publication/dissemination to the public.

Independently employed applicants must submit similar letters from organizations that have used their services in the past.

Press Identification Cards will be issued to individuals, not businesses, and are for the individual's use only. The cards are not transferable.

A Press Identification Card will not be issued to individuals engaged in advertising or lobbying.

Applications for a Press Identification Card are available on the Court's www.med.uscourts.gov/press-page. Applications are subject to review and approval by the Court and should be submitted via email at press@med.uscourts.gov or to the following address:

Clerk of Court
Edward T. Gignoux Courthouse
156 Federal Street
Portland, ME 04101

Members of the media are expected to abide by Court rules and practice governing security, decorum, use of electronic devices, and the privacy rights of victims, parties, and jurors. Failure to abide by these rules and practices can result in court sanctions, including revocation of an individual's Press Identification Card.

This policy applies to the courthouses in Portland and Bangor, Maine.