

Client's Guide to Court Behavior

Purpose

Courtroom etiquette has shifted over time. Lawyers not only provide clients with their legal specialties, but they also inform a client on what to do and not do in court. Behavior in court can heavily influence the outcome of a case. This newsletter is designed to be a resource for every client in every courtroom in the United States on how to act in the courtroom.

Who/What should come with you?

1. Avoid bringing anyone to court. If you feel you must bring someone for support, consult your attorney if bringing someone would be acceptable.
2. Never bring your children to court.
3. Unless it is an emergency, avoid using your cell phone in court. Turn your phone on silent before entering.

Timing

1. Never be late! Visit the courthouse before your court date in order to become comfortable with your surroundings! Doing this ensures you know where you're going on your court date. Be sure to find a place to park before your court date.
2. Clear your schedule, be prepared to spend all day in the courtroom.

Managing emotions in court

1. The opposing party and attorney will say things that may not be true or kind. Ignoring them is your best bet.
2. Do this in the courtroom, hallways, bathrooms etc. You may see the other party outside of the courtroom.
3. Do not speak in the courtroom unless addressed.

Proper Attire

1. Dress Professionally! At the very least, both men and women should qualify as business casual. Be sure that no clothes need dry-cleaned ahead of time. Avoid wrinkles.
2. Avoid flashy jewelry. Dress as if you are interviewing for a job. You want to present a professional image of yourself.

Communication with the Judge

1. Never speak to the Judge first. Speak to the judge only when addressed. Always address the judge as "Your Honor".
2. Never attempt to email the judge or judge's staff if you have an attorney. Know your boundaries. Contact your attorney and let them do the heavy lifting!

You are now ready for court!
