

COURTROOM PROTOCOL FOR COUNSEL

- ▶ The Bank Street and Main Street entrances to the courthouse open at 7:00 a.m. during court week. Attorneys appearing for oral argument must register in the library (Room 101) on the morning of argument. Registration opens 60 minutes before court starts and must be completed 30 minutes before court starts. Counsel will receive notification from the Clerk's Office of the starting time for each panel. The court generally convenes at 9:30 a.m., with the exception of the last day of the session, which convenes at 8:30 a.m. En banc oral arguments begin at 9:00 a.m. Counsel is provided with the identity of the panel during registration.
- ▶ Attorneys and their staff may bring electronic devices into the courthouse. **All electronic devices must be turned off in any courtroom or judicial chambers** unless being used by counsel, with all sounds muted, during argument of their case to retrieve documents previously downloaded to the device. A wireless Internet access point is available in the library for use with personal electronic devices (Room 101--see librarian for password). See [Electronic Device Policy](#).
- ▶ Coffee and tea are available in the library (Room 101) and the fourth floor conference room (Room 413). Food and beverages are not allowed elsewhere in the courthouse.
- ▶ Oral arguments are open to the public unless the court has granted a motion to seal that was filed on the public docket at least 5 days prior to argument. Local Rule 25(c).
- ▶ Please arrive at the courtroom 10 minutes prior to the start of oral argument sessions to hear any announcements regarding a change in the order of the cases.
- ▶ Counsel in the first case should seat themselves at counsel table before court starts. Counsel tables are not assigned to particular sides. Only attorneys and third-year students practicing under Local Rule 46(a) may sit at counsel table; clients are seated in the gallery.
- ▶ The courtroom timer reflects a digital countdown of your argument time. When 5 minutes remain, the timer light turns from green to amber. When the light turns red, you should resume your seat or, if you are responding to a question, request permission to complete your answer.
- ▶ Prior motion and leave of court are required to use physical or electronic exhibits at argument. It is generally unnecessary to enlarge documents for reference during oral argument since the panel can view the documents in the appendix.
- ▶ The judges come down from the bench after each case to shake hands with counsel and thank them for their advocacy. As the judges return to the bench, counsel for the next case seat themselves at counsel table. On occasion, the court takes a brief recess between cases.
- ▶ Oral argument audio files are posted on the Fourth Circuit's Internet site by the next business day. Do not refer to any sensitive or sealed information during argument. I.O.P. 34.3.
- ▶ Assisted listening devices and other auxiliary aids and services necessary to accommodate communication disabilities can be provided to parties and attorneys for oral argument. Please contact the court's Access Coordinator, Chief Deputy Clerk Mark Zanchelli, at (804) 916-2760, promptly after scheduling of argument so that appropriate arrangements can be made for hearing assistance or other accommodation.