

Writ Panel Procedures

Oral Argument in Cases Assigned to a Writ Panel.

If oral argument is requested in the petition for appeal, the appellant is entitled to state orally to a panel of Justices of this Court the reasons why the petition for appeal should be granted. Writ panel sessions for the presentation of oral arguments in support of a petition are held seven times per year. Counsel for appellants or pro se appellants are notified approximately three weeks prior to the hearing in writing of the date and time to present oral argument to a panel of Justices. Each argument shall not last longer than 10 minutes.

The appellee may attend the oral argument in order to listen and observe but is not entitled to present oral argument. Notice of oral argument shall be provided to counsel for appellee or any pro se appellee only if notice is requested in writing, either in correspondence to the Court or in the brief in opposition, in advance of the hearing.

See generally Rule 5:17(j).

Notice of Confirmation of Oral Argument.

The Court requires counsel for appellants or pro se appellants to acknowledge receipt of the notice of argument and to confirm attendance at the hearing by calling or writing the Office of the Chief Staff Attorney. As a general rule, counsel for appellants or pro se appellants must arrive at the Court and check in at least one hour prior to the scheduled time of their argument, or otherwise in accordance with any other instructions contained in the notice letter. Failure to appear when appellant's case is called may result in waiver of oral argument and the case being decided on the papers.

Prohibited Items.

Please note: Electronic devices of any kind (including, but not limited to, cell phones, blackberries, computers, pagers, e-book readers, etc.), guns, ammunition, sharp objects, aerosol cans or bottles, liquids or tools of any kind are not allowed in the Courthouse. If you have any of these items on your person when you check in at the Courthouse, you will not be permitted to enter, but instead will be instructed to return the item to your vehicle or your office.

Photo ID Required.

All attorneys, pro se litigants and other persons entering the Supreme Court Building to argue before a panel or to attend writ panel proceedings must present a government issued photo ID card in order to be admitted to the building.

Court Reporters.

If counsel or a pro se party in any case wishes to have a court reporter attend the proceedings, notice that a court reporter will be attending to record oral argument must be given to the Court by contacting the Office of the Chief Staff Attorney prior to the date of oral argument. Court reporters attending oral argument without prior notice to the Court may not be allowed to attend the hearing or to record oral argument, except at the Court's discretion.

Court reporters are not permitted to use any type of electronic recording device to take down the proceedings, including laptop or notebook computers, tape recorders or electronic stenographer machines. The Court requires that court reporters may only use manual stenographer machines to record oral argument.

Pro Hac Vice.

Any lawyer not licensed in Virginia who seeks to appear pro hoc vice to present oral argument must comply with the requirements of Rule 1A:4.

Standards of Attire.

Attorneys and pro se litigants appearing to present oral argument to the Court must be properly attired. Men must wear a suit with tie, or dress pants with a tie and jacket. Women must wear a suit, pants suit or dress. Jeans, tee-shirts, or other casual attire is not permitted for counsel or litigants appearing to argue. Hats may not be worn in the Courtroom, unless a hat is required by generally accepted religious observances, or is part of a military or police officer's uniform.

The writ panel proceedings are open to the general public. However, anyone wearing clothing that is profane, or otherwise indecent may not be permitted into the Courtroom. Ball caps and other hats should not be worn in the Courtroom unless the hat has a religious significance or is part of a military or police officer's uniform.