

SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA

CHIEF JUSTICE

S. BERNARD GOODWYN

JUSTICES

CLEO E. POWELL

D. ARTHUR KELSEY

STEPHEN R. MCCULLOUGH

TERESA M. CHAFIN

WESLEY G. RUSSELL, JR.

THOMAS P. MANN

SENIOR JUSTICES

CHARLES S. RUSSELL

LAWRENCE L. KOONTZ, JR.

DONALD W. LEMONS

LEROY F. MILLETTE, JR.

WILLIAM C. MIMS



SUPREME COURT BUILDING
100 NORTH NINTH STREET
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219
(804) 786-2251

CLERK

MURIEL-THERESA PITNEY

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

KARL R. HADE

CHIEF STAFF ATTORNEY

K. LORRAINE LORD

REPORTER OF DECISIONS

KENT SINCLAIR

STATE LAW LIBRARIAN

ALEXIS F. SHARP

Supreme Court of Virginia Policies for Photographing or Video-Recording of Oral Arguments April 22, 2024

1. Members of the media¹ are advised that the Supreme Court of Virginia provides a live audio stream of the oral arguments of the cases argued to a Writ Panel and during its Session, which can be accessed on the Court's website (<https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/home.html>). The Court also posts audio recordings of the oral arguments from its Session to the Court's website shortly after the last day of the Session during which the case is argued.

2. In addition, a member of the media who wishes to photograph, video-record, or obtain a digital audio-video recording of a Writ or Session oral argument in the Supreme Court of Virginia is permitted to do so under the following conditions. Using a form made available by the Court, the member of the media must submit a written request to the clerk of this Court at least five business days before the arguments and must provide a copy of such request to all counsel or self-represented parties in the matter. The request must specify whether it is (a) for permission to photograph the argument, (b) for permission to video-record the argument, or (c) for the Court's Division of Judicial Technology ("DJIT") to produce an audio-visual recording of the oral argument and to provide a digital copy of the recording to the requesting media member. Any request to video-record an argument may, in the alternative, also include a request to obtain an audio-video recording of the argument through DJIT.

3. Whether to grant the request, including the specific nature of the request granted, will be in the sole discretion of the Court. If a request to photograph or video-record the argument is granted, the member of the media who appears in court must present a valid media identification card issued by the Virginia State Police.

¹ A member of the media includes, but is not necessarily limited to, an employee of a news service that is eligible for pool participation as recognized by the Virginia Press Association and the Virginia Association of Broadcasters.

4. No more than one video camera, operated by not more than one person, will be admitted into the courtroom, and said camera must be mounted on a tripod. Likewise, only one still photographer, utilizing one camera and not more than two lenses for that camera, will be permitted into the courtroom. Only equipment that does not produce distracting sound or light may be employed in the courtroom. No artificial lighting (other than that normally present in the courtroom) may be employed in the courtroom. Equipment and operators thereof will be placed in an area designated by the clerk. Cellphones and computers (including laptops and tablets) are prohibited from the courtroom and may not be used for audio or video recording, even if a person has been granted permission to cover the proceedings.
5. On the day coverage is to take place, all equipment to be used to photograph or video record a proceeding must be in place by 8:45 a.m., unless other arrangements are made in advance with the clerk. If due to technical difficulties or any other reason this is not possible, the Court may rescind its permission to cover proceedings that day.
6. Media personnel must avoid activity that might distract participants or impair the dignity of the proceedings, must observe the customs of the Court, and must be dressed appropriately. The Court may terminate coverage of any portion of the proceedings or of the remainder of the proceedings if the Court determines that continuing coverage is disturbing the proceeding, will impede justice, or will create unfairness for any party.
7. If more than one person files a request to photograph or record an oral argument, the requesting parties must pool their efforts to limit the number of cameras and recording devices in the courtroom to that approved by the Court. Any such “pooling” arrangements among the media shall be through the established procedures set forth in the respective Guidelines of the Virginia Association of Broadcasters and the Virginia Press Association, and shall be the sole responsibility of the media, without calling upon the Court to mediate any dispute as to the appropriate media representative or equipment authorized to cover a particular proceeding. In the absence of advance media agreement on disputed equipment or personnel issues, the Court may exclude all contesting media personnel from a proceeding.

MEDIA REQUEST TO PHOTOGRAPH OR VIDEO-RECORD
ORAL ARGUMENTS

(This request shall be filed with the clerk of the court and counsel in the case(s) at least five business days prior to commencement of the proceeding to be covered.)

Pursuant to Code § 19.2-266, the undersigned hereby requests permission:

- To install the following equipment:
 - Video camera/recorder
 - Still Camera

in the Supreme Court of Virginia in order to record, photograph, or televise all or portions of the proceedings in the following case(s) on _____:
(date)

Subject to the Court's requirement regarding pooled coverage, the undersigned wishes to install this equipment in the courtroom on _____. The person who will be responsible for the installation and operation of this equipment during its use is:
(date)

Name _____
Address _____
Telephone No. _____

- To obtain a digital copy of an audio-visual recording, prepared by the Division of Judicial Technology, of the proceedings in the following cases(s) on _____:

A copy of this request has been provided to counsel in the case(s).

I hereby certify that if a request to install a TV camera or still camera is granted, all equipment will be installed and operated in accordance with the provisions of Code § 19.2-266 and all personnel of this media organization will abide by the provisions of the statute and any rulings of the court made pursuant to its authority to control conduct in the courtroom and all areas adjacent thereto. I also certify that I have read the policies for photographing for video-recording oral arguments promulgated by the Supreme Court of Virginia effective April 22, 2024 (https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/media_policy.pdf).

_____	_____	
_____	Signature	
_____	_____	_____
Media Organization and Address	Telephone Number	Date

The request is:

- Granted
- Granted in part upon the following conditions

- Denied

Date

Signature of Clerk at direction of Justice