

## **Courtroom Etiquette**

### **Arrive Early**

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the time of your hearing.
- No weapons are permitted in the courthouse.
- Wait in the foyer until the Court calls your case. Speak softly and maintain a professional demeanor. Avoid interrupting or distracting from other hearings.

### **Know Your Case**

- Know your case name, case number, and the time and date of your hearing.
- Bring copies of all documents you have submitted. Be prepared to reference them, if necessary.
- If you plan to introduce exhibits, have copies that you can provide to the Court and other parties. If you want the judge to sign an order, bring a copy to the hearing.
- Remember, the court staff cannot offer legal advice. You should not contact chambers to speak directly to the judge. If you want the judge to know something about your case, you must file documents through the front counter and ensure that notice is given to all those who are legally entitled to it.

### **Dress Properly**

- Make sure your attire is clean, neat, and in acceptable condition. This is a professional setting, and you are encouraged to dress accordingly. Avoid T-shirts, shorts, and sandals.
- Do not wear anything with slogans or pictures that someone may find offensive or disrespectful. Do not allow your attire to distract from your case or credibility.
- Completely remove hats and sunglasses before entering the courtroom. Do not rest sunglasses on your head.

### **Cell Phones**

- Cell phones should be set to silent or turned off. Vibrations can be audible and annoying, especially when the phone or device is resting on the bar table or near a microphone. The Court may confiscate your phone if it disrupts the proceedings.

## **Courtroom Behavior**

- Stand when addressing the judge. Address the judge as “Judge” or “Your Honor.” Such actions show respect for both the judge and the legal system.
- Speak clearly into the microphones. All courtroom proceedings are recorded or reported. This report or recording is the official record of the proceedings. Using the microphones is necessary to ensure that all events are properly recorded or reported.
- Do not interrupt or speak over others, especially the judge.
- Do not show overt reactions to things said and done in the courtroom, even if you disagree. Facial expressions and body language must be kept in check. Remember, the judge can see you at all times. Certain movements can be distracting and disrespectful.
- No audio or video recording is permitted during any proceeding unless you have received prior authorization from the judge.
- No food or drink permitted in the courtroom. Do not chew gum in the courtroom.

## **You are Your Own Attorney**

- You will be expected to follow the rules of civil procedure and evidence. For example, you will need to follow proper procedure when making objections and introducing exhibits.
- The rules of evidence are found in the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapters 47 through 56. The Elko County Library also has legal resources available.
- You are expected to properly examine witnesses. You must ask questions and allow them to answer. You may not argue with witnesses.
- Generally, statements made by nonparties outside of court are considered hearsay and are not allowed. Documents created by third parties need to be properly authenticated before the judge can consider them. For further information, consult NRS Chapters 51 and 52.
- You may only argue issues stated in your pleadings. Because all parties are entitled to legal notice, you may not argue issues not included in the pleadings.

### **Preparation for Court**

- Have your papers in order, tabbed, and readily available. This helps minimize noisy paper flipping and movement, which will be amplified by court microphones.
- Bring paper and writing instruments. Many things are said during a hearing. Taking notes helps parties remember statements and judicial pronouncements.
- Bring your schedule. You may need to schedule a trial, a follow-up hearing.
- If you wish to present audiovisual evidence, you must inform the court prior to the proceedings.

### **WELLS JUSTICE/MUNICIPAL COURT**

