

King County Superior Court

COURTROOM RULES OF CONDUCT FOR COUNSEL AND PARTIES PRO SE

Judge Kristin E. Ballinger

The mission of the King County Superior Court is to serve the public by ensuring justice through accessible and effective forums for the fair, understandable, and timely resolution of legal matters. These rules are intended to further this mission.

A. General

1. Silence all electronic devices, including cell phones and alarms.
2. Be on time. If you will be late, email the bailiff (ballinger.court@kingcounty.gov).
3. Make your objections briefly. Do not make speaking objections.
4. Respond to opposing counsel's objection only if asked to do so by the Court.
5. Allegations that counsel or pro se committed misconduct may be made only outside the presence of the jury.
6. As you are able, please stand to object and to address the Court.
7. Direct your remarks to the Court or to the jury, not to an opposing party or counsel.
8. Avoid interrupting the Court, opposing counsel, a potential jury member, or a witness.
9. The only permissible use of offensive language is when eliciting or quoting from the facts of the case, and only when necessary.
10. Do not eat or chew gum in the courtroom.

B. Voir Dire

The purpose of voir dire and the jury selection process is to empanel a jury that is impartial and unbiased. Therefore, during voir dire and the jury selection process,

1. Do not attempt to ingratiate yourself with jurors by telling personal anecdotes, establishing mutual friendships or acquaintances, or any other manner.
2. Do not argue your case or attempt to convince or sway the jury.

C. Testimony

1. Mark and log with the Clerk all exhibits in accordance with the pretrial order and any instructions on the Court's website.
2. Witnesses must be present and ready to testify when needed.
3. Address witnesses as, for example, Mr., Mrs., Ms., Mx., Deputy, or Dr. Except for children, do not address witnesses (including your client) by first names.
4. Do not make editorial comments after a witness's answer.
5. Do not ask repetitive questions.
6. Limit bench conferences to unavoidable circumstances.
7. The Court must be notified in advance of any firearms in the courtroom, for evidentiary purposes or otherwise. Firearms must be secured with a zip tie and unloaded. Never point firearms in the direction of any person, including yourself.
8. Ask permission of the Court to approach a witness.
9. At the end of each court day, be prepared to advise the Court and opposing counsel the witnesses you plan on calling the following day.
10. All witnesses are to be provided with copies of any Orders on Motions in Limine prior to their testimony, and an explanation regarding those Orders and their limitations on testimony.

D. Argument

1. Stay in the record. If you do not have a basis in the record, do not make the argument.
2. Be accurate in your description of case law. The Court reads the cases.
3. Get to the point. The Court will have read everything you have submitted. Please do not regurgitate your brief.