

POLICY FOR EXTENDED MEDIA COVERAGE IN THE ILLINOIS APPELLATE COURT

(Effective January 1, 2026)

1.0 Preamble

On November 29, 1983, the Illinois Supreme Court entered order M.R. No. 2634, allowing photographing, broadcasting, and televising of court proceedings in the Illinois Supreme and Appellate Courts on an experimental basis. On January 22, 1985, the Illinois Supreme Court amended the order to allow it on a permanent basis.

There have been significant changes in how court proceedings are held, and the technology used to gather and disseminate information to the public. In response, the Illinois Supreme Court has approved this policy, recommended by the Illinois Judicial Conference, governing extended media coverage in the Illinois Appellate Court. This policy takes effect on January 1, 2026. To the extent it is inconsistent with M.R. 2634, the conditions outlined in this policy shall govern.

2.0 Media Access

All five districts of the Illinois Appellate Court shall allow requests for extended media coverage of oral arguments in accordance with the provisions of this policy. The coverage shall always be subject to the discretion of the appellate panel assigned to hear the case.

Extended media coverage must not disrupt, distract, or interfere with the solemnity, decorum, and dignity of the court. Nothing in this policy shall limit or restrict the power, authority, or responsibility otherwise vested in the court to: (a) control the conduct of any proceeding; (b) maintain decorum and prevent distractions; (c) guarantee the safety of the courtroom, including any party or attorney; and (d) ensure the fair and impartial administration of justice.

3.0 Definitions

- (a) "Extended media coverage" means any media recording or broadcasting of oral arguments for the purpose of gathering and disseminating to the public.
- (b) "News media" means a newspaper or other periodical issued at regular intervals whether in print or electronic format, a news service whether in print or electronic format, a radio station, a television station, a television network, a community antenna television service, or a person or corporation that, in a

professional capacity, produces news content aimed at informing the public. In determining whether a requestor fits the definition of news media, these factors should be considered:

- A requestor's membership in a news/media trade or industry organization;
- A requestor's personal connection to the case;
- A requestor's editorial process, which should promote accountability and adherence to extended media coverage policies, rules, and content-sharing (pooling) obligations; and
- How the requestor, if granted access, would impact a party's right to a fair oral argument.

- (c) "Appellate panel" means the three-person appellate panel assigned to hear the case.
- (d) "Presiding judge" means the presiding judge of the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Districts.
- (e) "Executive committee chair" means the chair of the executive committee in the First District.
- (f) "Oral argument" means any oral argument heard in person or by videoconference by the Illinois Appellate Court.
- (g) "Media requestor" means someone who has submitted an extended media coverage request and meets the definition of news media as defined in Section 3(b) of this policy.
- (h) "Clerk of court" means the appellate clerk of the district in which extended media coverage of an oral argument is sought.
- (i) "Operations manager" means the person in the First District who oversees the day-to-day notices and scheduling of oral arguments.
- (j) "Media coordinator" means a media requestor or other member of the news media designated by the clerk of court or operations manager to help coordinate extended media coverage by news media who have been granted a request for extended media coverage. The media coordinator shall ensure the extended media coverage policy and other local rules and policies are followed by all news media. The media coordinator is responsible for content sharing (pooling) obligations.
- (k) "Portable electronic devices" are mobile devices capable of electronically storing, accessing, or transmitting information, such as personal computers, tablet computers, mobile telephones (including cellphones and any form of telephone with cameras and audio and video recording and transmission

capabilities), electronic calendars, e-book readers, smartwatches, and similar devices.

4.0 General

Extended media coverage of oral arguments may be permitted under the following conditions:

- (a) Permission first shall be granted by a majority of the appellate panel, who may prescribe such conditions of coverage as provided for in this policy.
- (b) Absent good cause shown, extended media coverage is prohibited in cases where the record is sealed and confidential, such as juvenile cases.
- (c) Equipment authorized by these provisions shall not be operated during a court recess, during conferences among members of the court, or during “off the record” conversations meant to be private.
- (d) The quantity and types of equipment permitted in the courtroom are subject to the appellate panel’s discretion within the parameters set forth in this policy. Each district may impose additional restrictions or parameters on equipment based on its circumstances.
- (e) Extended media coverage may be denied, limited, amended, or terminated at any time during the oral argument if this policy, other local policies and rules, or additional conditions imposed by the court have been violated, or if extended media coverage poses a danger to the safety of the courtroom or court participants, or if the right to a fair oral argument will be affected.
- (f) A decision to deny, limit, amend, or terminate extended media coverage is not appealable.
- (g) A judge of the appellate court may authorize extended media coverage of ceremonial proceedings at variance with provisions in this policy as the judge sees fit.
- (h) There shall be no filing fees associated with filing a request for extended media coverage or an objection to extended media coverage.
- (i) News media shall not conduct audio or video interviews within the courtroom. Interviews may be conducted only within designated news media areas, within personal offices of the interviewee, or outside the courthouse, in accordance with local rules and policies.

5.0 Procedural

- (a) Requestor. Only news media may submit requests for extended media coverage.

Sample Request for EMC attached as Appendix A.

(b) Requests. All requests for extended media coverage shall be filed with the clerk of court as soon as practicable, but not less than 7 days in advance of the date the oral argument sought to be covered is scheduled to begin. Requests may be made on shorter notice as the court may prescribe or when an oral argument is not scheduled at least 7 days in advance.

(c) Notice of Request. At the same time the request is filed, the media requestor shall provide notice of the request to the clerk of court, the operations manager, all counsel of record, and parties appearing without counsel. Court personnel shall promptly notify the appellate panel and the presiding judge or executive committee chair of the request.

(d) Objections. Any party that objects to extended media coverage should file a written objection, stating the reasons, within 3 days of receiving notice of the request. Objections may be made outside the 3-day window as the court prescribes.

Sample Objection attached as Appendix B.

(e) Notice of Objections. At the same time a written objection is filed, the objector shall provide notice of the objection to the requestor, the clerk of court, the operations manager, all counsel of record, and parties appearing without counsel. Court personnel shall promptly notify the appellate panel and the presiding judge or executive committee chair of the request.

(f) Discretion of the Appellate Panel. All party objections shall be heard and decided by the appellate panel prior to the commencement of the oral argument. The appellate panel shall decide whether to allow extended media coverage, in whole or in part, based on the filed papers alone, including affidavits, if any. Each district and the appellate panel maintain broad discretion in deciding all matters related to extended media coverage.

(g) Nothing in this policy shall excuse or discontinue the current practice of promptly posting audio of all oral arguments on the Illinois Supreme Court's website.

Sample Order attached as Appendix C.

6.0 Technical

(a) Equipment specifications. All equipment used by media personnel in the courtroom during oral argument must operate quietly and without drawing attention,

so as not to disrupt or distract from the proceedings. Media personnel may be required to demonstrate compliance with these requirements, and failure to do so satisfactorily may result in the exclusion of the equipment from the courtroom.

(b) Audio equipment. Microphones, wiring, and audio recording equipment shall be of adequate technical quality to prevent interference with courtroom amplification systems or electronic recording systems. Microphones for judges and those at counsel table shall be equipped with power switches.

(c) Lighting. No auxiliary lighting of any kind shall be used in the courtroom. Nor shall any light or other display be detectable to participants to indicate when any equipment is in operation.

(d) Pooling. News media are encouraged to pool equipment and personnel in all proceedings and must do so, when necessary, due to space limitations in the courtroom or limits on equipment, as set forth below. It is the media coordinator's responsibility to set up pooling arrangements that follow the court's order for the oral argument.

1. Photography. No more than two news media representatives may take photos during an oral argument.

2. Audiovisual recording. No more than two news media representatives may perform video recording during an oral argument.

3. Digital media. Any number of media representatives may be designated to perform online journalism (live-tweeting, blogging, posting case developments) during an oral argument.

4. Sound recording. No more than one audio system, with designated personnel to operate it, shall be permitted.

5. Livestreaming. No more than one livestream of oral argument, with designated personnel to operate it, shall be permitted.

6. Use of electronic devices for other activities. In accordance with the [Illinois Supreme Court Policy on Electronic Devices](#), any number of media representatives may be designated to use portable electronic devices during an oral argument for notetaking or other activities.

(e) Location of equipment and personnel. Equipment and operating personnel shall be in, and coverage of the oral argument shall take place from, an area or areas within

the courtroom designated by the court, the clerk of court, the operations manager, or other authorized court personnel. The area or areas designated shall provide reasonable access to the oral argument to be covered. Whenever practicable, sound recording equipment and its operating personnel should be located outside the courtroom. Equipment shall not be stored in the courthouse without permission.

(f) Equipment setup and operation. The court, the clerk of court, the operations manager, or other authorized court personnel may issue specific instructions and timeframes regarding equipment setup and installation. Equipment shall be operated from a fixed position. News media shall not move about the courtroom while oral argument is in session, nor shall they engage in any movement attracting undue attention.