

About 352nd District Court

Arriving at the Courthouse - Procedures, Decorum & Attire

All courthouse visitors must pass through the security station and metal detectors at the Tarrant County Justice Center. The carrying of guns and weapons of any kind onto the premises by visitors is expressly forbidden by law. During the security screening process the security personnel may require visitors to empty their pockets of and remove items such as coins, metal, jewelry, chains, which can set off the metal detector. Purses or bags will have to be placed on the conveyor belt for security review. Visitors should consider this process when deciding what to wear or carry into the courthouse with them.

Each person must go through the metal detector individually, which can be time-consuming. In addition, the elevators are usually quite full and busy. Because these two conditions may cause delay in getting to the courtroom itself, visitors should factor these conditions into planning their arrival time in court.

Because all of the courts in the courthouse consider very important and serious matters which may affect the lives of citizens for many years, it is a building in which visitors should conduct themselves in a somber and dignified manner. Visitors are expected to be quiet and calm in the hallways and the courtrooms at all times.

Visitors should dress appropriately. Generally speaking, no shorts, short skirts, low-cut blouses, sleeveless shirts, hats, or other inappropriate attire are allowed in the courtrooms. No food or beverages are permitted in most courtrooms. Visitors should not read newspapers or engage in any other distracting activities while sitting in the gallery of any courtroom.

All cell phones, pagers and other electronic devices need to be off or in silent mode (not low volume, but silent) while you are in the courtroom. Do not accept cell phone calls while you are in the courtroom. Do not text or engage in any other type of electronic communication from the courtroom without explicit permission to do so by the judge. Do not take photographs or any audio or visual recordings of the courtroom proceedings without express permission of the judge.

The judge and the bailiff have ultimate control of the courtroom and the area around it. If visitors are noisy, boisterous, falling asleep, disruptive or making facial or other non-verbal gestures which are distracting, they may be removed from the courtroom by the bailiff.

If you have any questions about the courthouse or any proceedings that you want to ask Judge Burgess, let the bailiff know. Time permitting, Judge Burgess will be happy answer any questions that he is ethically permitted to answer. (He is not allowed to comment on the merits of pending cases, although he is permitted to explain the proceedings in general terms.)