

**Superior Court of the State of California,
County of Yolo**

Media Policy

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure and protect the rights of litigants and assist the news media in understanding the functions of the judicial process, including:

- The establishment of a communication structure to inform the media about case-related developments;
- Ensuring fair, complete, and accurate reporting of case developments; and
- Accommodating media coverage with the least disruption to Court proceedings.

Section 2. Policy

The policy of the Yolo Superior Court (“Court”) is to provide information in a timely manner and to ensure adequate access to all public proceedings.

Section 3. Media Contact Information

The Court’s Public Information Office may be contacted at pio@yolo.courts.ca.gov or (530) 406-6838. The Court may, from time to time, disseminate case information via email. Should any media agency wish to be included on the Court’s contact list for this purpose, it shall notify the Court’s Public Information Office in writing. It is the sole responsibility of the media agencies to notify the Court of any change in email notification. This procedure shall not be a substitute for media agency staff appearing at hearings.

In an effort to provide efficient and timely information to members of the media and ensure limited impacts on staff, the Court has established a main point of contact for simple procedural requests for information. For simple procedural questions (i.e., regarding the disposition of a case) all contacts should be directed to the Judicial and Executive Assistant, by telephone at (530) 406-6838. If he or she cannot provide you with the information immediately, he or she will record your information and contact you as soon as the necessary information can be located. The Court will endeavor to answer such questions by the end of the business day or the following business day. Please do not contact multiple divisions within the Court; all units will refer media agencies to the above telephone number. This accommodation shall not be a substitute for media agency staff appearing at hearings. Only media requests that are faxed to (530) 406-6835 will be accepted.

Section 4. Record and Exhibit Viewing and Copying

The Court's policy governing the viewing and copying of Court record and exhibits is set forth in Appendix 7 of the Local Rules, which may be accessed on the Court's website at www.yolo.courts.ca.gov.

Section 5. Confidential Documents

Court files are open and are available to the public and media. However, some files contain sealed documents or references to documents that are made confidential either by law or Court order. A list of these types of documents that are confidential may be accessed on the Court's website at: www.yolo.courts.ca.gov. Access to sealed documents within Court records requires an order from the Court.

Court documents are not covered by the California Public Records Act or the Federal Freedom of Information Act, but the Court's policy is to ensure access to all records that are not confidential. If you believe you have been denied access to documents that should be open to the public, please contact the Court's Public Information Office at pio@yolo.courts.ca.gov or (530) 406-6838.

Section 6. Photographing, Recording, or Broadcasting Inside the Courtroom

Pursuant to Local Rule 4.5, photographing, videotaping, televising, or otherwise recording any Court proceeding is prohibited unless, pursuant to California Rule of Court 1.150, a written request has been filed and approved by the Judge presiding at the proceeding prior to its commencement. If two or more media agencies request video coverage of a proceeding, they must file a joint statement of an agreed pooling arrangement. If they are unable to agree, and no good cause for lack of an agreement is shown, the judge may deny the requested media coverage. Media wishing to photograph, record and/or broadcast inside a courtroom shall complete and file Judicial Council forms, MC-500, *Media Request to Photograph, Record, or Broadcast*, and MC-510, *Order on Media Request to Permit Coverage*. All requests must be filed at least five (5) court days before the proceeding to be covered, unless good cause is shown. (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 1.150(e)(1).) The granting of such requests is at the sole discretion of the judge presiding over the proceeding. The clerk must promptly notify the parties that a request has been filed. For purposes of this rule, a faxed request shall be considered a filing provided that it complies with Rule of Court 1.150. The media request forms may be found on the Court's website at www.yolo.courts.ca.gov. Requests filed by fax must be faxed to (530) 406-6835. Media requests will not be accepted if faxed to any other fax number.

Section 7. Photographing, Recording, or Broadcasting Outside the Courtroom

No one may use a camera, camera phone, audio recorder, video recorder, or any other electronic device to transmit, record, or capture images and/or sounds in any portion of the courthouse, except as permitted by local rule and California Rule of Court 1.150. Pursuant to

Local Rule 4.5, anyone wishing to photograph, record or capture images and/or sounds, and/or broadcast in the common areas of any court facility shall meet with the Court Executive Officer, Assistant Court Executive Officer, or their designee, prior to operating such equipment. The granting of such requests is at the sole discretion of the Court. Requests will be granted only if the proposed activity does not impede the conduct of Court business or interfere with the security of Court patrons.

Section 8. High Profile Cases

The Presiding Judge has the discretion to identify any case as a high profile case for purposes of this media policy. If any media agency wishes to have a case identified as a high profile case, it shall submit a written request to the Presiding Judge.

Pursuant to California Rule of Court 2.503(e), the Court will make a determination on a case by case basis if remote electronic access will be provided for high profile cases. Under California Rule of Court 2.503, the Presiding Judge of the Court, or a judge assigned by the Presiding Judge, may exercise discretion to permit electronic access by the public to all or a portion of the public court records in an individual case if (1) the number of requests for access to documents in the case is extraordinarily high and (2) responding to those requests would significantly burden the operations of the Court.

Pursuant to California Rule of Court 2.503(e), the Court will provide five (5) days notice to the parties and the public before it makes a determination to provide remote electronic access under this section. Notice to the public will be accomplished by posting notice on the Court's website. Any person may file comments with the Court for consideration, but no hearing is required.

- If the Court decides to permit remote electronic access in an individual case, access will be made available on the Court's website at www.yolo.courts.ca.gov. The Court's order will specify which records will be made available by remote electronic access. It shall be the filing party's responsibility to provide the Court with both an original un-redacted version of a document for filing and a redacted version of the document for the remote electronic access.
- The court should, to the extent feasible, redact the following information from records to which it allows remote access to include the following: driver license numbers; dates of birth; social security numbers; Criminal Identification and Information and National Crime Information numbers; addresses and phone numbers of parties, victims, witnesses, and court personnel; medical or psychiatric information; financial information; account numbers; and other personal identifying information.
- The court may order any party who files a document containing such information to provide the court with both an original unredacted version of the document for filing in the court file and a redacted version of the document for remote electronic access.
- No juror names or other juror identifying information may be provided by remote electronic access.

- This subdivision does not apply to any document in the original court file; it applies only to documents that are available by remote electronic access.

For each case in which the Court decides to provide remote electronic access, the Court retains complete and sole discretion in deciding which documents will be posted in a particular high profile case. For example, the Court may post a list of scheduled calendar events, minute orders, certain charging documents, and certain law and motion filings. Posted documents will typically be deleted from the website after a period of no less than thirty (30) days. The Court may also prepare for the convenience of the public a brief informational guide for each individual case, which may include, but not limited to, the case number, the department, party names, and other related case information.

The Court will make every effort to post relevant information to the website within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the document. It is the sole responsibility of the public and media to monitor the website for case developments and updates. The information provided and obtained from the website does not constitute the official record of the Court and cannot be used as evidence in Court. The Court reserves the right to decline to post any particular document or take down a case or any files from the case at any time and in its sole discretion.

Section 9. Obstruction or Disruption Due to Media

At no time shall any grouping of people in any hallway, entrance, or exit become so large or disruptive as to obstruct pedestrian traffic, create a safety hazard, or disrupt the Court's ability to discharge its functions. Pursuant to California Rule of Court 1.150(e)(4), the Presiding Judge may issue a standing order that will assist the Judicial Officers in limiting the occupancy of the public corridors in court facilities immediately adjacent thereto, and limiting and controlling the behavior of persons gathered therein, when the circumstances indicate that the operations of the Court, or public access to the Court, are being disrupted or threaten to be disrupted by congestion or disturbance due to the presence of the media.

Before limiting the activities of members of the media within the courthouse, or in areas immediately adjacent to the court building within the courthouse grounds, the Court shall give such notice as is practical in the circumstances to all identifiable news media members who may be affected by an order under this section of the policy to enable them to make a showing that the proposed order is unnecessary or should be modified. Nothing in this section is intended to impact the procedures established in California Rule of Court 1.150. Any party aggrieved by an order made pursuant to this section of the policy may apply to the Court to modify the order, or to be exempted from it, by making a request in writing to the judge who issued the order, or to the Presiding Judge if the judge who issued the order is not available.

Section 10. Responsibility for Rules

Each media agency shall be responsible for ensuring that all media personnel who cover Court proceedings know and follow the provisions of this policy, local rules, California Rule of Court 1.150, and any applicable court orders. Copies of this policy may be obtained from the Executive Office or the Court's website at www.yolo.courts.ca.gov.

Pursuant to California Rule of Court 1.150(f), any violation of this rule or an order made under this rule is an unlawful interference with the proceedings of the Court and may be the basis for an order terminating media coverage, a citation of contempt of Court, or an order imposing monetary or other sanctions as provided by law.