
LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP# P-120

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SUBJECT: COURT PROCEDURES

INDEX AS: COURTROOM: COURT: BAILIFF:

EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/17/2005 REVISED DATE:

I. PURPOSE:

To establish procedures for the Court and to outline the duties and obligations of Deputies assigned as bailiffs.

- A. COURT PROCEDURES FOR THIS DEPARTMENT WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CAPTAIN, AS ASSIGNED BY THE SHERIFF AND THE MAJOR. THE CAPTAIN WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR COURT ROOM SECURITY AND WILL ALSO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSIGNMENTS OF ESCORTING INMATES TO AND FROM THE COURT ROOM. THIS CAPTAIN WILL WORK WITH THE CAPTAIN OF THE JAIL FOR PROPER TRANSPORTING OF INMATES. IT WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THIS CAPTAIN TO REVIEW COURT CALENDARS FOR MISDEMEANORS, FELONIES, MAGISTRATE, PROBATE AND JUVENILE TO ASSURE THAT ALL PERSONS AND DOCUMENTS ARE IN ORDER.

THE CAPTAIN ASSUMING THESE RESPONSIBILITIES WILL ANSWER DIRECTLY TO THE MAJOR.

II. COURTROOM DEMEANOR-GENERAL:

- A. A Deputy shall be attentive and respectful during court and administrative hearings; and when called as a witness, a Deputy shall speak clearly, calmly, and in a manner to be readily heard and understood by all parties involved.
- B. A Deputy shall testify only to the truth as he/she knows it and with accuracy, confining their testimony to the case being heard, the evidence properly before the tribunal, and a reasonable response to questions asked.

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- C. A Deputy shall not exhibit malice, bias, prejudice, animosity, or favor toward any party involved in a matter before the court or administrative hearing.
- D. A Deputy attending or in the immediate vicinity of any tribunal shall not exhibit in any way his displeasure, animosity, or disbelief upon hearing any decision of the court or hearing officer, argument or statement of counsel, or presentation of evidence with which he/she does not agree.

III. PHYSICAL SECURITY PLAN:

- A. The Sheriff and/or his designated personnel shall be responsible for maintaining the physical security of the Courtroom. The Courtroom is to be used only for the following purposes:

- 1. Court;
- 2. Arraignments;
- 3. Hearings;
- 4. In-service training;
- 5. Special meetings;

- B. Key Control:

Keys to the Courtroom shall be limited to the following persons:

- 1. Superior Court Judges;
- 2. Magistrate Court Judges;
- 3. Bailiff;
- 4. County Administrator;
- 5. Maintenance;
- 6. Juvenile Judge;
- 7. Other Authorized person;

It is the responsibility of these persons to make sure that all doors in the courtroom are locked when the room is unoccupied. Whenever the courtroom is to be used by other

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than Court personnel, it must be cleared through the County Administrator.

IV. COURT PROCEDURES:

A. Access:

Persons who are required to appear in Court shall be directed to enter the courtroom from an authorized entrance.

B. Prisoners from the Jail shall be escorted from the Jail by a Deputy or Transport Officer and shall enter the courtroom through an authorized entrance. Handcuffs will be removed from prisoners prior to entering the courtroom, unless the prisoner is exhibiting violent or destructive behavior.

C. Hand carried articles such as purses, wallets, umbrellas, coats, etc.; may be allowed in the courtroom. Articles such as suitcases, briefcases (except those carried by attorneys) , packages, boxes, bags or any item of a suspicious nature will not be allowed in any high risk trial. Bailiff may inspect or search any item of a suspicious nature prior to, or during any court proceedings.

D. Escorting Defendants: Once a case has been decided the bailiff or Deputy will escort the defendant back to his/her seat in the courtroom. Defendants that are brought from the Jail will remain in the courtroom until all Jail Defendants have been tried unless conditions exist to warrant their removal. Defendants will be escorted back to the Jail to either serve their time, be released, or pay their fine and be released.

E. Officers waiting to testify shall be seated in the area designated or in the hall by the entrance . The bailiff will summon the officer when needed to testify.

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F. The District Attorney or a designee shall call the cases before the court, record dispositions, control the audio recordings of the court, and report any problems or unusual circumstances.

V. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

A. FIRE:

In the event of fire in the Court House or the Courtroom, all bailiffs will assist in evacuation. All persons will be directed outside the building through normal evacuation routes as posted throughout the building. Fire extinguishers are available in the outside corridor if necessary. Notification of communications will be the responsibility of the bailiff.

B. MEDICAL EMERGENCY:

In the event of a medical emergency, i.e. seizure, heart attach, etc., in the courtroom, the bailiff shall notify the communications for contacting the Emergency Medical Services.

Bailiffs will be responsible for any crowd control or other assistance.

VI. BAILIFFS:

A. The Sheriff shall appoint the Chief Bailiff for the Courts. His/Her duties shall include:

1. Supervise courtroom security;
2. Conduct a search of the courtroom before Court for contraband;
3. Assist in security of prisoners;
4. Attend to other matters at the Judge's direction.

B. Assistant bailiffs shall be appointed before court. Only qualified personnel will be appointed to bailiff duties.

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Assistant Bailiff duties include:

1. Assist in escorting of prisoners to and from the courtroom;
2. Provide security for the prisoners;
3. Perform other duties at the direction of the Judge or Chief Bailiff.

VII. WEAPONS IN COURTROOM:

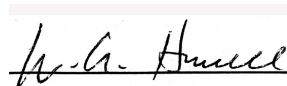
While the Laurens Superior Court is in session, only Deputies who are qualified by a certified Instructor to carry a firearm may carry a firearm inside the courtroom unless they are testifying. If they are testifying, they must also remove the entire gun belt. This prohibition shall not apply to exclude firearms which are to be used as evidence in a proceeding before the Laurens Superior Court. The allowing of weapons in a courtroom are also allowed at the discretion of the presiding Judge.

VIII. WEAPONS IN STATE COURTROOMS:

The same rules apply as stated in section VII. Weapons allowed will also be at the discretion of the presiding Judge.

IX. WEAPONS IN JUVENILE COURTROOM:

The same rules apply here as the rules for State Courts. Weapons allowed will also be at the discretion of the presiding Judge


W. A. HARRELL
SHERIFF

8/17/2005
EFFECTIVE DATE