
**GALVESTON COUNTY
COURT AT LAW NO. 3
COURTROOM ETIQUETTE AND CONDUCT**

1. **GUIDELINES FOR COURTROOM ETIQUETTE**. People who appear in court must observe these and other conventions of courteous, orderly behavior.

- a) Be punctual.
- b) Dress to maintain the dignity, integrity, decorum, and professional atmosphere of the Court and the justice system. (No shorts, bare midriffs, sunglasses, hats, swimwear, sandals, or clothing that shows undergarments (bras, boxers, etc.)).
- c) Remain in attendance until excused. Parties and counsel must remain in attendance during jury deliberations; absence waives the right to attend the return of the verdict.
- d) Refrain from reading newspapers or playing with electronic devices. (No reading of magazines or newspapers, and no audible cell phones or pagers, including no playing of any gaming system).
- e) Address others only by their titles and surnames, including lawyers, witnesses, and court personnel.
- f) Stand when the Court speaks to you; stand when you speak to the Court. Speak only to the Court, except for questioning witnesses and, in opening and closing addresses to the jury.
- g) Avoid approaching the bench. When a bench conference is unavoidable, obtain permission first.
- h) Hand to the bailiff, not the judge or reporter, all things for examination by the judge.
- i) Stand when the judge or jury enters or leaves the courtroom.
- j) Question witnesses while seated at counsel table or standing at the lectern. When it is necessary to question a witness about an exhibit, ask permission to approach the witness.
- k) Conduct no experiment or demonstration without permission.
- l) Do not participate in a trial as an attorney if you expect you may be called as a material witness.
- m) Avoid disparaging remarks and acrimony toward counsel, and discourage ill will between the litigants. Counsel must abstain from unnecessary references to opposing counsel, especially peculiarities.

- n) Counsel are responsible for advising their clients and witnesses about proper courtroom behavior.

2. **GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT.** See also *The Texas Lawyers Creed*.

- a) In fulfilling his or her primary duty to the client, a lawyer must be ever conscious of the broader duty to the judicial system that serves both attorney and client.
- b) A lawyer owes, to the judiciary, candor, diligence and utmost respect.
- c) A lawyer owes, to opposing counsel, a duty of courtesy and cooperation, the observance of which is necessary for the efficient administration of our system of justice and the respect of the public it serves.
- d) A lawyer unquestionably owes, to the administration of justice, the fundamental duties of personal dignity and professional integrity.
- e) Lawyers should treat each other, the opposing party, the court, and members of the court staff with courtesy and civility and conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.
- f) A client has no right to demand that counsel abuse the opposite party or indulge in offensive conduct. A lawyer shall always treat adverse witnesses and suitors with fairness and due consideration.
- g) In adversary proceedings, clients are litigants and though ill feeling may exist between clients, such ill feeling should not influence a lawyer's conduct, attitude, or demeanor towards opposing lawyers.
- h) A lawyer should not use any form of discovery, or the scheduling of discovery, as a means of harassing opposing counsel or counsel's client.
- i) Lawyers will be punctual in communications with others and in honoring scheduled appearances, and will recognize that neglect and tardiness are demeaning to the lawyer and to the judicial system.
- j) If a fellow member of the Bar makes a just request for cooperation, or seeks scheduling accommodation, a lawyer will not arbitrarily or unreasonably withhold consent.
- k) Effective advocacy does not require antagonistic or obnoxious behavior and members of the Bar will adhere to the higher standard of conduct which judges, lawyers, clients, and the public may rightfully expect.