



Delaware Court of Chancery Guidelines for Use of Laptops by the Media

The following guidelines apply to the use of laptops by members of the media attending Court of Chancery proceedings. The restrictions in this policy are important for two critical reasons. From a technical perspective, electronic transmissions interfere with the court reporters' equipment and ability to provide a "live feed" to the parties. Justice, decorum and respect for the hard work the parties are engaged in requires that the Court minimize potential noise or other distractions arising from the use of laptops in Court. The policy thus balances the interest of allowing the working press to take notes and begin drafts of breaking stories with the need for the courtroom to function for its primary purpose.

The guidelines are to be strictly adhered to:

- a. Authorized media representatives may bring a laptop computer into the courtroom for the sole purpose of note taking while Court is in session. For purposes of this policy, a media representative shall have bona fide credentials or identification issued by a bona fide media organization, whose news reports are made available to the general public on a regular basis.
- b. The laptop must fit onto the user's lap and not take up any additional space. It must be positioned and operated silently and in a manner which does not cause any distractions or detract from the dignity and decorum of the proceeding. Laptops must operate on battery power due to the limited amount of space and number of electrical outlets in the courtrooms, and to reduce the risk of accidents caused by excessive wires in the walkway. Users will be able to charge laptops outside of the courtroom during breaks.

- c. Laptops shall **not** be used in the courtroom to broadcast, webcast, record audio or video, photograph, e-mail, blog, tweet, text, post, or transmit by any other means. Internet usage interferes with equipment used by court reporters, therefore electronic transmissions via WiFi, air card, wave card or any other means is strictly prohibited.
- d. Although laptops will be permitted with prior approval, the following devices remain prohibited: audio recorders, cell phones, smart phones, iPads, iPods, and any other device that can access the internet via mobile broadband technology, *i.e.*, 3g.
- e. Requests to bring a laptop must be submitted by completing the "Laptop Authorization Form" attached hereto, along with instructions.
- f. Upon approval by the Chancellor, a media representative will be authorized to use a laptop, in accordance with this policy, during Court of Chancery proceedings. This privilege may be retracted by the presiding Judicial Officer at any time during a proceeding, for any reason. A presiding Judicial Officer may authorize use of a laptop consistent with these guidelines, on an ad hoc basis, while consideration of the Laptop Authorization Form by the Chancellor is pending.
- g. At the discretion of the Chancellor or presiding Judicial Officer in whose proceeding a violation occurs, a media representative who violates this policy may be subject to the penalties of contempt or may lose the privilege of attending future proceedings in the Court of Chancery.
- h. This authorization will commence on the date the appropriate form is approved by the Chancellor and shall be effective until December 31 of the calendar year in which it was approved. Thereafter, the authorization may be renewed annually by completing a new laptop authorization form. A renewed authorization will be effective January 1 of the following year.



Delaware Court of Chancery Laptop Authorization Form

Members of the media who wish to use a laptop computer while attending Court of Chancery proceedings must complete the information listed below and submit this form to the Register in Chancery.

Name: _____ Media Outlet: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone Number: (____) _____

*By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the Court of Chancery Guidelines for Use of Laptops by the Media. I agree to use the laptop for **note taking purposes only**. While in the courtroom I will not connect to the internet, record audio or video, broadcast or webcast. I acknowledge that the Chancellor or a presiding Judicial Officer may retract this authorization at any time for any reason. I understand that this authorization expires on December 31 of the calendar year in which it was approved and that I must renew the authorization, effective January 1 of the following year, on an annual basis thereafter.*

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mail to:

**Register in Chancery
New Castle County Courthouse
500 N. King St., Suite 1551
Wilmington, DE 19801
Attn: Court Administrator**

To be completed by court staff

Approved: ____

_____ is authorized to bring a laptop to proceedings in the Court of Chancery, along with media credentials and photo ID.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Chancellor