



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA**

MEDIA PLAN

APPROVED: MARCH 5, 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	ADOPTION OF PLAN BY COURT	1
II.	APPLICATION OF PLAN	1
III.	MEDIA RESPONSE TEAM.....	1
IV.	CHAMBERS REPRESENTATIVE	1
V.	MEDIA COORDINATOR	2
VI.	HOURS AND ACCESS TO THE COURT.....	3
VII.	MEDIA ROOMS & OVERFLOW COURTROOMS	3
VIII.	HIGH PROFILE CASE SEATING.....	4
IX.	MOBILE ELECTRONIC DEVICES.....	4
X.	MEDIA APPLICATION	4
XI.	EXTERNAL WEBSITE AND CASES OF INTEREST.....	5
XII.	GOVDELIVERY.....	5
XIII.	LOGISTICS.....	5
XIV.	HOSTED MEDIA PROGRAMS	5
XV.	EVIDENCE EXHIBITS.....	6

I. ADOPTION OF PLAN BY COURT

This Plan for the effective management of media relations in the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota has been approved and adopted by the Court.

II. APPLICATION OF PLAN

This Plan is applicable to all judges, chambers staff, and Clerk's Office staff for the District of Minnesota.

Judicial employees who communicate with the media must consult Canon 2, Canon 3D, and Canon 4A of the [Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees](#).

Judges who communicate with the media may wish to review Canon 2, Canon 3A(6), and Canon 4 of the [Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges](#).

III. MEDIA RESPONSE TEAM

The Media Response Team will be comprised of the Chief Judge, Clerk of Court, Media Coordinator, the current U.S. Marshal (or their designee), the Director of Information Services, and one chambers representative (for high profile cases only).

The duties and responsibilities of the Media Response Team include, but are not limited to:

- a. Receive inquiries from the public or members of the media and communicate such inquiries with the Media Coordinator.
- b. Determine appropriate responses to media inquiries and draft responses to such in coordination with the Chief Judge, Clerk of Court, and Media Coordinator.

IV. CHAMBERS REPRESENTATIVE

Members of all chambers will inform the Media Coordinator of cases of interest to the public in a timely manner, including cases dealing with:

- a. High profile parties (celebrities, politicians etc.)
- b. Questions of pressing social matters (First Amendment cases)
- c. Cases that have already received media attention

V. MEDIA COORDINATOR

The Media Coordinator is the key point of contact for the media and general public.

The duties and responsibilities of the Media Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- a. Receive inquiries from the public or members of the media and communicate such inquiries with the Media Response Team as needed.
- b. Issue press releases, including statements posted to the Court's internal website, external website, and social media accounts.
- c. Establish and maintain the Court's [GovDelivery](#) account and subscription topic lists, with the Clerk of Court and Chief Deputy as backup administrators.
- d. Maintain stock of media badges to be used during high profile cases.
- e. Assign seats to credentialed members of the media for high profile cases and communicate seating assignments with the U.S. Marshal's Office.
- f. Maintain the Court's media webpage.
- g. Maintain the list of credential members of the media, including current email addresses and places of employment.
- h. Determine the need for overflow courtrooms, as well as the need for media-only overflow courtrooms.

- i. Maintain digital head shots of judges to be shared with the media as requested.
- j. Maintain access codes to Media Rooms in all courthouses.
- k. Perform such other duties as directed by the Chief Judge and/or the Clerk of Court.

VI. HOURS AND ACCESS TO THE COURT

The Court is open from 8:00am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays or court closures as determined by the Chief Judge, such as weather emergencies. Members of the media have access to the courthouses during business hours only, unless observing a court proceeding that has extended beyond normal business hours. In the event a court proceeding takes place past 4:30pm, members of the media will have access to the courthouse until 15 minutes after the close of court.

VII. MEDIA ROOMS & OVERFLOW COURTROOMS

The Court maintains News Media Rooms on the 12th floor of the Minneapolis Courthouse and the 6th floor of the St. Paul Courthouse. Media Rooms are to be used by credentialed members of the media for activities in the normal course of covering court proceedings. Members of the media employed by a newspaper, television, radio or other media organization are eligible to apply for media credentials.

The Media Coordinator, together with the presiding judge and U.S. Marshals, will determine when overflow courtrooms with closed-circuit video feeds are needed. Overflow courtrooms that are open to the public will follow the same rules as the courtroom in which the judge is presiding. In the event of an extremely high profile case, a media only overflow courtroom will be set up to allow credentialed media to use electronic devices.

Ad hoc overflow courtrooms will be set up in the Duluth and Fergus Falls courthouses when necessary.

VIII. HIGH PROFILE CASE SEATING

High profile cases, defined as those court proceedings being attended by more than ten (10) members of the media, will operate on an assigned seating system. In coordination with the presiding judge and U.S. Marshals, the Media Coordinator will designate assigned seating locations in the courtroom for credentialed media and communicate that information with the Rapid Response Team.

IX. MOBILE ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Members of the media who have obtained court-issued credentials to enter District of Minnesota courthouses with a cellular phone must keep the device muted while in the courthouse and may not use it to take photographs or record sounds or images. Note-taking, emailing, and social media updating are allowed from within the courtroom for credentialed members of the media as long as it does not disrupt court or influence the jurors.

Laptop computers, electronic tablets and similar mobile electronic computing devices, excluding cellular phones, are permitted in the courthouses for credentialed media, but may not be used in any courtroom without the written approval of the presiding judge. Permitted use of cellular phones does not require approval from the presiding judge.

Devices used solely for capturing or recording still photographs and videos, such as cameras, tape recorders or similar devices are prohibited in the courtrooms at all times. These items may be stored in the News Media Rooms.

Electronic devices may be reviewed for compliance if ordered by the presiding judge.

X. MEDIA APPLICATION

Members of the media seeking court-issued credentials must complete the appropriate application and file it with the Media Coordinator. Applications may be found on the Court's external website at http://www.mnd.uscourts.gov/Media_Information.shtml.

XI. EXTERNAL WEBSITE AND CASES OF INTEREST

The Media Coordinator, together with the Director of Information Services, are responsible for creating and maintaining a page on the Court's external website for the media. The page will include information including, but not limited to, how to obtain court-issued credentials, how to obtain an Electronic Case Management System (ECF) media account, how to gain access to News Media Rooms, how to reserve assigned seating for an upcoming trial, who to call with questions or concerns, general court decorum, the electronic media device policy, courthouse locations and access.

XII. GOVDELIVERY

GovDelivery allows for the drafting and sending of emails, text messages, and social media posts via a secure connection. The Media Coordinator will establish and maintain the Court's GovDelivery distribution lists and send communications as appropriate.

XIII. LOGISTICS

When appropriate for high profile cases, the presiding judge may issue an additional decorum order, outside of the judge's standing decorum rules, addressing courthouse hours; use of electronics; behavior inside the courtroom and overflow rooms; and the prohibition of any interaction with, or depiction of, jurors. In addition, the Media Coordinator may issue additional advisories to spell out seating policies, media truck parking logistics, credential procedures, and any other items delegated to the Clerk's Office or U.S. Marshals.

All decorum orders will be posted on the Court's website. Members of the media may also be asked to read and sign a summary of key rules when obtaining media badges.

XIV. HOSTED MEDIA PROGRAMS

The goal of hosted media programs is to foster open and positive communication between the Court and local media, to aid in the accurate reporting of cases and Court functions.

At least once per calendar year, the Court will host members of the local media at one of the District's courthouses for a program covering one, or more, of the following topics: best practices when covering the federal court, courtroom decorum, PACER and other public data sites, court question & answer sessions, and other relevant issues.

XV. EVIDENCE EXHIBITS

Members of the media interested in inspecting evidence should consult with the offering party after the day's adjournment, once counsel has made themselves available for questions