

WHAT TO EXPECT AT A COURTHOUSE

Security:

NOTE: Many courthouses do not allow you to bring in a phone.

King County Correctional Facility (also used for Seattle arraignments) have free electronic lockers at the entrance where you can leave your phone/laptop/bag.

When you enter the courthouse you must go through a metal detector, and your belongings will go through an X-ray machine operated by security personnel. You are required to empty your pockets, remove jewelry (watches, belts, etc.) and place the contents in a container for further inspection. You will also be required to place overcoats, purses, briefcases, backpacks, and parcels on the belt of the x-ray machine, and you will walk through the metal detector.

If the x-ray or metal detector sets off an alert or alarm, security personnel may perform a scan using a hand-held wand. Security personnel may conduct a physical search of personal articles to determine the cause of the alert or alarm. You may be asked to remove your shoes and send them through the x-ray machine.

Before leaving the security screening area, be sure to retrieve all personal possessions. Security personnel WILL NOT hold items while person(s) are in the courthouse. Security personnel are not responsible for anything left at the security screening area.

You are not allowed to bring the following items into the courthouse: firearms, ammunition and explosive devices; cutting instruments of any type (including knives, penknives, flashlights, scissors, box cutters, work tools, and large metal nail files); handcuffs, handcuff keys, or anything with a cutting edge; pepper spray, mace or any other chemical defense sprays; alcohol or illegal substances, including illegal drugs; baseball bats; cameras; flashlights; craft needles (e.g., knitting, crocheting, etc.); flammable liquids, aerosol or spray fragrances; tools; or clothing carried in bags.

Courtroom Logistics

What not to wear:

Shorts, cut-offs, muscle shirts, halter or tank tops, bare midriffs, exposed undergarments, shirts with inappropriate graphics or wording, etc. See-through clothing. Hats (except when worn for religious reasons).

In the Courtroom

Food and drink are not permitted in any courtroom. If you need to step out to get some water and/or use the bathroom, feel free! Try to coordinate with your courtwatcher partner so at least one person is present in the courtroom at all times during the shift.

Should questions arise about why you are in the courtroom during your observation, you should say “I am part of Court Watch, a project to observe and document what happens in arraignments.” If a court officer asks you to leave, remind them that all courtrooms are open to the public (with some limited exceptions which don’t apply to arraignments). If someone is interested in who is organizing CourtWatch, tell them it is a group of concerned citizens who are interested in the arraignment process, bail setting procedures and bail affordability.

Connecting with other CourtWatch WA Volunteers

Where do I meet my fellow CourtWatch Watchers?

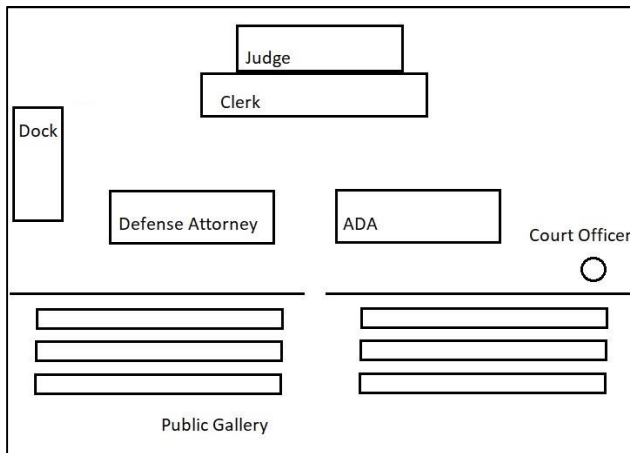
Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes before your scheduled shift and wait on the benches/seats in front of the courtroom you will be observing. Bring your CourtWatch forms and keep them visible so that other Courtwatchers will know how to identify you.

Should we sit together?

Yep! Feel free to share information as you can. However, please make sure each courtwatcher enters their own set of data into the online survey.

What does the courtroom look like?

Each courtroom you go to will look different, but they all have a lot of commonalities. The judge will always sit at the front of the courtroom looking over everyone. The clerk



will always be close to the judge. There usually will not be a court reporter, but if there is, that person will be close to the judge and the clerk. The Defense Attorney table will always be the table closest to the “dock”, where jailed accused people stand when their case is being heard. The ADA table is always the one farthest from the dock.

(Sample court layout only)