

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Bristol County Probate & Family Court



Gina L. DeRossi
Register of Probate

COURT ROOM ETIQUETTE

1. STAND WHEN THE JUDGE ENTERS OR LEAVES THE BENCH.

The Court Officer will tell you when to sit and stand. If you are in doubt, stand when the Judge is standing. You can usually sit down once the Judge is seated, unless you are speaking with the Judge.

2. STAND AND SPEAK WHEN THE JUDGE TALKS TO YOU.

Remain standing as long as you and the Judge are talking. You may need to stay standing even if the Judge talks to the person on the other side of your case. If you are in doubt, ask the Judge before sitting down.

3. THE JUDGE WILL LET YOU KNOW WHEN TO SPEAK.

Never get into an argument or even a discussion with the other side in front of the Judge. Always speak directly to the Judge, unless the Judge allows you to answer formal questions from the other side.

4. SPEAK CLEARLY.

You need to speak and not just nod or shake your head because court proceedings are always recorded. Listen carefully to the questions you are asked. Be direct and to the point when answering questions.

5. ALWAYS ADDRESS THE JUDGE AS “YOUR HONOR”.

The Judge must keep order in the courtroom and will be making important decisions about

you and your children. Be respectful and understand that the Judge likes to keep the proceedings as orderly as possible. This helps keep the process fair to everyone.

6. YOUR CASE MAY BE TAKEN “UNDER ADVISEMENT”.

This means that a Judge needs time to think about how to decide your case and the court will mail you the decision once it is made. Make sure that the Court has your current mailing address to ensure receiving the Judge’s decision in a timely fashion.

7. DO NOT TALK ON YOUR WAY OUT OR EVEN RIGHT OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF THE COURTROOM.

Many times another hearing starts as soon as your’s ends. If you are talking, this can interfere with the next case and in some cases, it can even be picked up on the recording device in the courtroom.

THESE GUIDELINES AND ALL COURT RULES APPLY TO YOU AND ATTORNEYS!