

NCRA Standards for Video Depositions

Standard #1	The videographer shall work with the reporter to promote, protect and ensure the production of a quality record.
Standard #2	Tripods shall be of the fluid-head type.
Standard #3	The optical zoom ratio of the camera lens used for the recording of depositions shall have a minimum focal length ratio of 10:1.
Standard #4	The maximum recording time per recording media file shall be limited to 120 minutes (2 hours) unless otherwise specified by stipulation, rule, order or notice.
Standard #5	Depositions shall be recorded at the standard play (SP) speed unless otherwise specified by stipulation, rule, order or notice.
Standard #6	Any video format is acceptable for the purpose of recording depositions provided that a simultaneous back-up video recording is made.
Standard #7	The primary video recording device used for recording shall be equipped with manual audio-level adjustment controls.
Standard #8	The videographer shall be able to provide the court reporter an audio recording which shall be the output from the audio mixer or other mixed source.
Standard #9	The videographer shall determine if existing light levels exceed the minimum illumination requirements specified for the camera being used and provide ancillary lighting if required.
Standard #10	Except for special circumstances, the videographer shall record all depositions with the camera video gain boost circuits, if any, set to the "0" db or off position.
Standard #11	The videographer shall evaluate room illumination for uniform color balance and provide color temperature correction if required
Standard #12	The videographer shall mask out or otherwise eliminate any backlight that would render the video image of the deponent in poor contrast.
Standard #13	The videographer shall arrange ancillary lighting in such a way so as to make the deponent appear as natural as possible. Ancillary lighting shall be positioned so as not to create or cast distracting shadows on the subject or background. Soft-lighting methods such as provided by diffusion media, bounce, or umbrella techniques shall be employed.
Standard #14	The videographer shall position the recording equipment and arrange participant seating in such a way so as to facilitate the shooting of a frontal or 3/4 frontal view of the deponent during both direct and cross-examinations
Standard #15	Prior to the test recording, the camera shall be white balanced to the available light and/or ancillary light that illuminates the area where the deponent will be seated.
Standard #16	The video portion of the deposition shall be recorded with equipment that is capable of continuously displaying and recording date and time. The videographer shall use this reference in maintaining the index-of-events log.
Standard #17	In the case of a recording device capable of stereo recording, sound shall be recorded on both audio channels.
Standard #18	If the video equipment features automatic audio gain, these circuits shall be set to the "off" position.
Standard #19	A minimum of four microphones are to be used at all times. Three of these microphones shall be of the lavalier type and deployed in the following manner.

	<p>One microphone each for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the deponent b. the first direct examiner c. the first cross examiner
Standard #20	The videographer shall use a multi-channel, active microphone mixer with a volume unit meter and a minimum of four microphone inputs.
Standard #21	Prior to the test recording, the videographer shall calibrate the audio mixer and the audio input levels of the video recording devices by using a tone oscillator and unity gain procedures.
Standard #22	Prior to the test recording, the videographer shall ensure that the video monitoring device accurately reflects the video being recorded.
Standard #23	The camera shall be positioned on a level tripod, and the lens barrel shall be at a height which is near to eye level of the deponent.
Standard #24	<p>The videographer shall position the camera in such a way so as to provide a clear view of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the deponent's face and hand during oath or affirmation. b. the presentation of exhibits or documents such as x-rays, charts, diagrams or models. c. the deponent and at least a portion of the document from which the deponent is reading.
Standard #25	The videographer shall endeavor to eliminate any distractions from the foreground and background whenever possible.
Standard #26	The videographer shall make and review a test recording before the start of the deposition. The test recording shall remain on all of the source recording media.
Standard #27	The videographer shall play back the test recording through a monitor and evaluate the test recording for optimal picture and sound quality before beginning the deposition.
Standard #28	The video portion of the test recording shall demonstrate an image in sharp focus with acceptable contrast, hue, and color saturation of the deponent's position.
Standard #29	The audio portion of the test recording shall provide a minimum recording level of 20 decibels above system or acoustical noise, and shall include the testing and identification of each of the four individual microphones.
Standard #30	The videographer shall inquire about any stipulations prior to the start of the deposition recording.
Standard #31	The videographer shall determine the existence and nature of any instructions contained in rules, court orders, or stipulations regarding procedures for recording the video deposition.
Standard #32	In the absence of a rule, order, or stipulation which directs the shooting style of the video deposition, the videographer shall be able to inform all counsel of the commonly accepted variations of recording styles.
Standard #33	The videographer shall inform all counsel of the shooting style and procedures that he or she intends to use during the course of the deposition.
Standard #34	Camera movement, such as zoom and pan techniques, shall be deliberate.
Standard #35	Prior to the start of the recording, the videographer shall inquire about any exhibits that are to be visually recorded during the course of the deposition.

Standard #36	The videographer shall inform all participants about the sensitivity of the microphones and recommend that participants turn off or silence their cell phones or other mobile devices during the deposition.
Standard #37	The videographer shall inform all participants that statements which are not intended to be part of the record can inadvertently be recorded, even if whispered.
Standard #38	The videographer shall explain and clarify to all participants on- and off-the-record procedures. The videographer shall go on the record at the request of any one counsel.
Standard #39	The videographer shall interrupt the proceedings in the event of any of the following situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the oath or affirmation not having been administered. b. the occurrence of acoustical noise that may interfere with the sound track. c. the inability of the videographer to accomplish timely zoom, focus, or recording of an exhibit. d. the occurrence of technical difficulties. e. the end-of-recording media warning at 5 minutes before the end of any original recording.
Standard #40	The videographer shall control the placement of each microphone on the participants to achieve an optimum signal-to-noise ratio
Standard #41	The videographer shall adjust the audio mixer levels for each participant before the start of the deposition recording.
Standard #42	Prior to recording the appearances and introduction of counsel, the videographer shall record spoken deposition identification. The complete identification shall be recorded on the audio portion of the first original or on both the audio and video portions of the first original. The identification shall contain the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the name and business address of the videographer and court reporter b. the time and date of the deposition c. the address where the deposition is being held d. the deponent's full name e. the identity of all persons present
Standard #43	The videographer shall continuously monitor the video recording with a monitor which is connected to the output of the video recording devices.
Standard #44	The videographer shall monitor the audio continuously throughout the deposition via headphones connected to the headphone output of the video recording device or at some point in the chain after the video recording device.
Standard #45	During recording of the deposition, the videographer shall make all verbal announcements loud enough to be clearly recorded on the audio portion of the recorded deposition.
Standard #46	During the course of off-the-record breaks, the videographer shall (when possible) spot check the last portion recorded for audio and video quality.
Standard #47	The videographer shall maintain a running index or log of events throughout the deposition. This index of events shall accompany the original recording at all times. The index will indicate the time of occurrence of the following events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. start and stop of each media unit. b. the start of direct and cross-examinations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. sealed/protected/attorneys eyes only content. d. on and off the record. e. on and off the video. f. approximate run time of each original recording and/or the deposition.
Standard #48	In the event that requests to go off the record are disputed by counsel, the videographer shall continue recording the deposition until agreement by all counsel.
Standard #49	The videographer shall record a clear announcement at the conclusion of any original media unit of the end time of that recording and the series number of that original media unit.
Standard #50	Upon the conclusion of any original recording media of the deposition, the videographer shall, if possible, immediately activate the record inhibitor of the media.
Standard #51	<p>If a deposition requires more than one original recording media, the videographer shall begin each succeeding media unit with an identification announcement. Unless directed by a rule, order or stipulation, this announcement shall include as a minimum the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. this is the beginning of original recording number XX. b. this is a continuation of the deposition of (witness name) at (date, time and place). c. the name and business address of the videographer and court reporter.
Standard #52	The videographer shall record a clear announcement of the conclusion of the deposition, the custody of the original/master recordings, the end time and date, and any relevant stipulations.
Standard #53	<p>The videographer shall sign and date a certification document. This document will accompany the original recording and state the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the accompanying video deposition is the complete original/master recording. b. the recording has not been altered in any way while in the videographer's possession. c. the recording is fair, true, accurate and complete. d. the videographer is not an attorney to, related to, or employed by any party or any party's attorney and has no financial interest in the matter. e. the total number of media units.
Standard #54	<p>The videographer shall label the recorded deposition with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. date of the deposition. b. number of media units in the series if more than one is used. c. number of each original media unit in the series. d. approximate run time of each recording media. e. an abbreviated caption. f. name of the witness. g. whether the segment contains sealed/protected/attorneys eyes only content.
Standard #55	The videographer shall maintain the index-of-events log and certification of the original recording.
Standard #56	The videographer shall ensure that a chronological log of all video depositions recorded is maintained. This log shall be used as a record of the chain of custody of the original/master recording.

Standard #57	The videographer shall preserve the confidentiality of the deposition and take whatever steps necessary to ensure this confidentiality.
Standard #58	The videographer shall make every effort to ensure that equal technical quality of both picture and sound will be made available to all parties.
Standard #59	The videographer shall remain neutral to the interests of all parties at all times
Standard #60	In the event the videographer is asked by counsel or any party to depart from standards of neutrality, the CLVS shall inform counsel that his or her conduct is bound by the NCRA CLVS Code of Ethics, which mandates impartiality.
Standard #61	HD recordings should be delivered at 720p or 1080i. The frame rate should never be less than 29.97 FPS.
Standard #62	For delivery of the HD source, care should be taken to ensure that if a 16:9 picture is cropped to a 4:3 frame it does not crop out any portion of the deponent. In the event cropping will obscure a portion of the deponent, 16:9 letterbox is acceptable.

updated 010716