
COURT REPORTER

BILL *of* RIGHTS

The National Court Reporters Association wishes to communicate to its membership the basic rights to which court reporters are entitled when serving attorneys, the court system, or parties to litigation, in both official and freelance situations.

ARTICLE I

Advanced technology. Court reporters shall be allowed to use advanced technology in all legal settings. Depending on the task and appropriateness of applications, this would include computer-aided transcription systems, compressed transcripts, ASCII disks of transcripts, realtime display of proceedings, and other computerized services.

ARTICLE II

Respect. Court reporters complete specific educational courses and training programs that include rigorous testing of legal procedures, terminology, and transcription skills. Many states require court reporters to complete a state certification exam. As educated, trained legal professionals, court reporters deserve to be treated with dignity and respect in regard to their position within the legal profession.

ARTICLE III

Legal responsibility. As officers of the court, no court reporter shall be asked to break the law, change the record, or do anything unethical or improper. Title 28 of the U.S. Code requires that each session of Federal court and all other proceedings designated by the court or one of its judges “shall be recorded verbatim.” Official court reporters are charged by most jurisdictions with this responsibility in preparing and protecting the legal record of court proceedings.

ARTICLE IV

Information. Court reporters shall have the right to obtain basic information before a legal proceeding commences. Court reporters shall be supplied with full and complete information regarding a case prior to trial or deposition – such as names of parties or witnesses and special terminology that will be used – as well as full disclosure of any special arrangements, financial or otherwise, between court reporting agencies and attorneys or parties to the litigation.

ARTICLE V

Proximity. Court reporters must be seated within reasonable proximity to those conducting or participating in legal proceedings. As makers of the record, court reporters require full and easy access to all parties.

ARTICLE VI

Impartiality. Court reporters shall remain neutral and impartial in all matters and treat all parties equally. They should never be asked to favor one party over another. Rule 28(c) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure states: “No depositions shall be taken before a person who is a relative or employee or attorney or counsel of any of the parties, or is a relative or employee of such attorney or counsel, or is financially interested in the action.”

ARTICLE VII

Equal treatment. No court reporter shall be made subject to ethnic, social, or sexual harassment. If such a situation exists, the court reporter reserves the professional right to refuse to provide court reporting services.

ARTICLE VIII

Proper working conditions. Court reporters, as trained legal professionals, have the right to work in safe, clean, and appropriate conditions at all times.

ARTICLE IX

Compensation. Court reporters are entitled to be paid in a timely manner for services rendered – including reporting services, transcription services, and each copy of the deposition requested by the attorney. Court reporters should also receive timely prior notification for cancellation or postponement of depositions.

ARTICLE X

Education. Court reporters have the right to expect a minimum qualification standard for entry into the profession to insure credibility and professionalism. Nearly two-thirds of NCRA's reporter members have received certification as Registered Professional Reporters. Because of the technological advancements that have been made to enhance the profession – for both official and freelance court reporters – additional levels of experience, certifications, and accrued continuing education credits provide a graduated scale of qualifications for court reporters' professional status.

NCRA MISSION STATEMENT

NCRA promotes excellence among those who capture and convert the spoken word to text and is committed to supporting every member in achieving the highest level of professional expertise.

