

Office of the Minneapolis City Attorney  
Court Testimony Information Sheet

Outside the courtroom:

- Remain in the hallway until called into the courtroom to testify.
- Do not discuss the case, your testimony, or what transpires in the courtroom with other witnesses or potential witnesses until the case has been resolved.
- Do not discuss the case, your testimony, or what transpires in the courtroom within earshot of jurors or potential jurors.
- Do not converse with jurors or potential jurors. If approached by anyone you think may be a juror, politely say that you are a witness and are unable to talk with him or her until the case is resolved.

Inside the courtroom:

- Once on the witness stand, make yourself comfortable. Ask for water or a break if you need to. Ask that a question be repeated, restated, or clarified if you find it confusing.
- Speak clearly and loudly so that all parties - particularly the judge, jurors (if any), and court reporter may hear you.
- The jurors (or if no jury, the judge) are the finders of fact. As much as is possible and comfortable for you, direct your responses to the finders of fact.
- The court reporter must document all comments made on the record. For this reason, only one person may speak at a time. Do not interrupt others. The court reporter cannot document head nodding or “Um-hm” response. Answer with a verbal “yes” or “no” or other appropriate words.
- If an objection is made while you are speaking on the record, stop speaking immediately. Once the judge has issued a ruling on the objection (either “sustained” or “overruled”), either the judge or the attorney questioning you will direct you to continue with your response or ask you a different question.

Important tips to remember:

- Pause and think before answering a question.
- If you do not know or cannot remember the answer to a question posed to you, do not guess at the answer. You may simply answer that you do not know or that you cannot remember.
- If a question posed to you is confusing or unclear, do not answer until you are certain what is being asked.
- Do not allow anyone to misstate your words, put words in your mouth, or confuse you into giving a response of which you are not certain.
- **Rely on the truth as you know it, your own recollections, your own observations, and your own memory of true and accurate events.**