

GR 36
TRIAL COURT SECURITY

(a) Purpose. A safe courthouse environment is fundamental to the administration of justice. Employees, case participants, and members of the public should expect safe and secure courthouses. This rule is intended to encourage incident reporting and well-coordinated efforts to provide basic security and safety measures in Washington courts.

(b) Definition. “Incident” is defined as a threat to or assault against the court community, including court personnel, litigants, attorneys, witnesses, jurors, or others using the courthouse. It also includes any event or threatening situation that disrupts the court or compromises the safety of the court community.

(c) Incident Reports.

(1) Reporting Method.

(i) The court should make a record of each incident as soon as practicable, but no later than two days after the incident. The report shall be kept on file by the local court administrator.

(ii) The court shall report all incidents electronically to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) on the AOC Threat/Incident Report Form within one week of the incident.

(d) Court Security Committee.

(1) Role. Each trial court should form a Court Security Committee to coordinate the adoption of court security policies and make recommendations regarding security protocols, policies, and procedures necessary to protect the public, court personnel and users, and court facilities. The Court Security Committee should adopt a Court Security Plan and thereafter revise the plan as may be necessary.

(2) Committee Composition. The Presiding Judge for each court should convene a Court Security Committee meeting and invite representatives from the following:

- (i) judiciary;
- (ii) court clerical staff;
- (iii) prosecuting authority’s office;
- (iv) public defender’s office;
- (v) executive branch;
- (vi) law enforcement;
- (vii) facilities/maintenance department;
- (viii) any other agency of government housed in the same building;
- (ix) any other person the presiding judge deems appropriate.

(e) Court Security Plan. Each Court Security Committee should create a Court Security Plan for each courthouse location. If a Court Security Plan is adopted; the Court Administrator shall keep the Plan on file and accessible to the court community. The Court Security Plan should be in writing and should address:

(1) routine security operations, including security screening for persons entering the court facility, secure storage of weapons not permitted in the courthouse, parking, landscaping, interior and exterior lighting, interior and exterior doors, intrusion and detection alarms, window security, protocol for building access for first responders, and provision of building floor plans for first responders.

(2) written or oral threats or declarations of intent to inflict pain or injury upon anyone in the court community;

(3) physical layout of court facility and escape routes;

(4) threats--in court or by other means (telephone, e-mail, website, etc.);

(5) bomb threat;

(6) hostage situation;

(7) weapons in the court facility;

(8) active shooter

(9) escaped prisoner;

(10) high risk trial plan;

(11) routine security operations;

(12) Threat and security incident response techniques in and around the court facility, which may include how to defuse situations and remain calm during an incident;

(13) Personal safety techniques in and around the court facility;

(14) Irate and abusive individuals.

(f) Security Drills. Each court may hold security drills as determined by the Court Security Committee, as deemed necessary by the Presiding Judge in consultation with other authorities in the courthouse. Drills should include all court personnel, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, and other regular court users.

(g) Minimum Court Security Standards. Every court shall endeavor to meet or exceed the following minimum standards. Should the court fail to meet the minimum court security standards, the court should state in the Court Security Plan why the minimum standards were not met.

(1) *Policy and Procedure Guide for all Court and Clerk Personnel.* Trial courts shall develop a Court Security Policy and Procedure Guide, using as examples the guides from Spokane County and Seattle Municipal Court, which guides are available from the AOC.

(2) *Weapons Screening by Uniformed Security Personnel at all Public Entrances.* Uniformed security personnel shall perform weapons screening at all public entrances, using, as a minimum, metal-detector wand screening and physical examination of bags, briefcases, packages, etc.

(3) *Security Audits Every Three Years.* Trial courts shall conduct a security audit at least every three years. Updates to the Court Security Policy and Procedure Guide shall be disseminated to all court and clerk personnel.

(4) *Security Cameras Recording with Loops of at Least Seven days, with Signage That Recording Is Taking Place.* Security cameras shall be placed at strategic locations as determined by the Court Security Committee, with signs posted nearby advising that recording is taking place. Security camera footage shall be retained for at least 7 days.

(5) *Duress Alarms at Multiple Strategic Locations, Such as Clerk's Office, Administration, and Courtrooms, with Broadcasting to the Nearest Law Enforcement Agency with Jurisdiction over the Court Site.* Easily accessible and discreetly placed duress alarms shall be located at multiple strategic locations as determined by the Court Security Committee. The duress alarm shall broadcast to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction to respond to the site and that is closest to the site.

(6) *Emergency Notification Broadcast System in Place, with Standardized Color Coding, and All Personnel Trained on the System.* An emergency notification broadcast system shall be established with standardized color coding denoting the level of emergency. All court and clerk personnel shall be trained on use of the system.

(7) *Active Shooter Training for All Court and Clerk Personnel.* Active shooter training shall be delivered to all court and clerk personnel.

[Adopted effective September 1, 2017.]