Courtroom Technology Attorney Reference Guide

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COURTROOMS

The Western District of North Carolina has courtrooms located in Asheville, Statesville, and Charlotte. All courtrooms are equipped with similar presentation equipment. Please schedule a training session for the courtroom you will be using. Registration for training can be submitted from the website.

The courtroom deputy can control all aspects of the evidence display system from a single panel. Each counsel table is equipped with monitors, two microphones, an annotation monitor, and a document camera. For convenience, several video adaptors are available to allow device connection to the system. In addition, each counsel table has a control panel that allows users to control evidence presentation. An annotation monitor is also available at the witness stand. Jury monitors are present in the jury box. Gallery monitors are available on each side of the courtroom. The courtrooms are equipped with remote participant capabilities giving interoperability with almost any device remotely. WIFI is also available.

AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT

The following equipment is available in all the courtrooms in the Western District of North Carolina to assist with presenting evidence:

- HDMI Connection
- VGA Connection
- HDMI Adapter ring (Lightning, Mini Display port, USC-C)
- Sound Reinforcement
- Wireless microphones and lapel microphones
- Document Cameras
- Independent attorney table control panels
- Jury monitors
- Annotation at the attorney tables and witness stand
- Headphones for the hearing impaired
- An Interpreter system
- Video conferencing

Internet

Wireless internet connectivity is available in all courtrooms. Look for "**Attorney_Net**" in your list of available wireless networks.

Before using the free Wi-Fi, you will be required to accept the disclaimer and login.

Ask the courtroom deputy for the username and password.

Document Camera

Figure 1 - Document Camera

Document Cameras are available in each courtroom. The camera allows counsel to present physical evidence to the courtroom.

Document Camera Features

The most common features used with the camera are:

	Feature
Power	Powers the camera on or off. The camera should be turned on using the Evidence Display equipment, but if not, press this button.
Freeze	Used primarily when switching objects. The last image on the camera is frozen until a new item is loaded. Hold down the button until message "Freeze On" appears on the screen.
Zoom	Allows an item to appear closer (+) or farther away (-)
Focus	Cameras are set to autofocus; however, you can manually adjust the image to appear sharper or blurrier.

Figure 2 - Document Camera Features

Annotation Monitor

There are annotation monitors available for use in each courtroom. They are located on each attorney table and at the witness stand.

The touch screen monitors allow visual annotations on exhibits or can be used as whiteboards permitting freehand drawings. Each attorney control panel is equipped with multiple color and line thickness choices, and a 'clear the last annotation' or 'clear all annotations' option.

Using the Annotation Monitor

Below are some helpful tips when using the annotation monitor:

- Use your fingers to draw lines, circles and other markings that emphasize items displayed on the monitor. This cannot be used to "highlight" text. Each attorney control panel will be marked for color, line thickness and clear. Gently tap the button for the corresponding action.

- To change the annotation color or line thickness gently tap the corresponding button

Use Annotation controls on the top of the attorney control panel to change color and line thickness, clear, undo or redo annotation

Figure 2 - Annotation Monitor

Microphones

Attorney tables are equipped with at least two table microphones. Microphones are also located at the witness area and judge's bench. Speakers are strategically placed throughout the courtroom to broadcast what is spoken into the microphones.

Courtroom Deputies control the microphone volume level.

Manual Mute Button

By default, the courtroom microphones are turned on. Remember to always speak into the microphone when addressing the court or witness. To mute the microphone, press and continually hold the manual "mute" button.

NOTE: Unmuted microphones could allow unintended sounds to be picked up by the audio and/or recording systems.
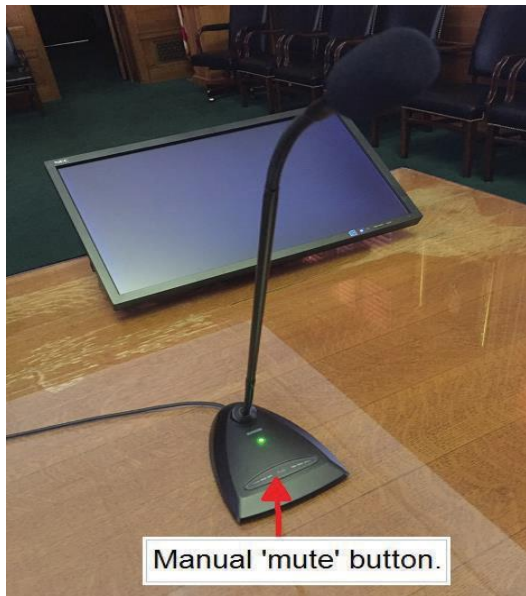

Figure 3 - Microphone/Manual Mute Button

Wireless Microphones

The courtrooms are equipped with wireless microphones that can be used during jury selection or during simultaneous language interpretation.

Headsets

Upon request, headsets can be provided for the hearing-impaired.

Video Conference

The Western District of North Carolina has video conferencing systems available for use in all courtrooms. The Judge handling the proceeding must agree to allow witnesses or other appearances by the way of video conferencing. <u>Advance scheduling and notice are required.</u>

To request use of this equipment, please contact the Clerk's Office <u>in advance</u> of the court proceeding where the Video Conferencing is needed. There is a [link](#) on the web site to request training. Sufficient time is needed to perform at least one test call and check compatibility with equipment at the other site.

Teleconference

Teleconferencing equipment is available in all courtrooms. Contact the Clerk's Office for information.

EVIDENCE DISPLAY

The Evidence Display system has become the control center of all technology within the court. From one panel, you can control the evidence being displayed in courtroom. Our courts have one controller at each attorney table, at the courtroom deputy's bench, and the judge's bench.

Laptop Inputs

Several laptop/tablet connections are available per counsel table.

Different Types of Inputs

HDMI and VGA cables are available in all the courtrooms to connect your personal computer into the evidence presentation system. Each table also has a ring with lightning, USB-C, mini display port adapters and audio cables.
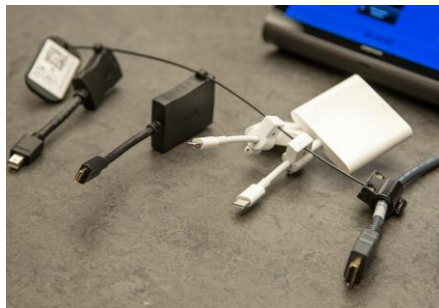

Figure 4 - VGA Cable

Figure 5 - HDMI and Adapters

Connecting a Laptop to the Evidence Display

From the counsel table, connect the HDMI, VGA, Mini-display, or Adapter connected to the HDMI cable to your PC **before** powering on the machine. Connect the audio cables (if needed). Failure to make the connections while your PC is turned off, may require you to toggle the video sources to recognize the output to your computer.

Audio

Prior to a court proceeding, it is important to test the audio to make sure it is loud enough and can be heard throughout the courtroom.

Testing the Audio

Connect the cabling as instructed above in the 'Connecting a Laptop to the Evidence Display'. Next, verify the audio plays through the courtroom's equipment. Should the audio not be audible, change the output by right clicking on the speaker icon on the bottom right of the PC and choose "sound settings" then choose the corresponding output. Mac users will need to open sound from the settings icon. You will then choose the output tab and select Crestron as your output.

Control Panel

The courtroom deputy is responsible for 'powering up' the system. Once the courtroom deputy has turned on the system, counsel can activate the display at the attorney table by touching anywhere on the control panel screen.

Figure 6 - Attorney Control Panel

Attorney Evidence Display Panel

Although the evidence display control panel can differ from courtroom to courtroom, the display is similar, and can be broken down into two areas:

1. **Media Sources:** Select the source that is projecting the evidence, such as Document Camera or PC from the left column.

2. **Displays:** Select who sees the evidence being presented at the bottom of the screen. If the display button is green, the display is enabled. If the display button is red, the display is disabled.
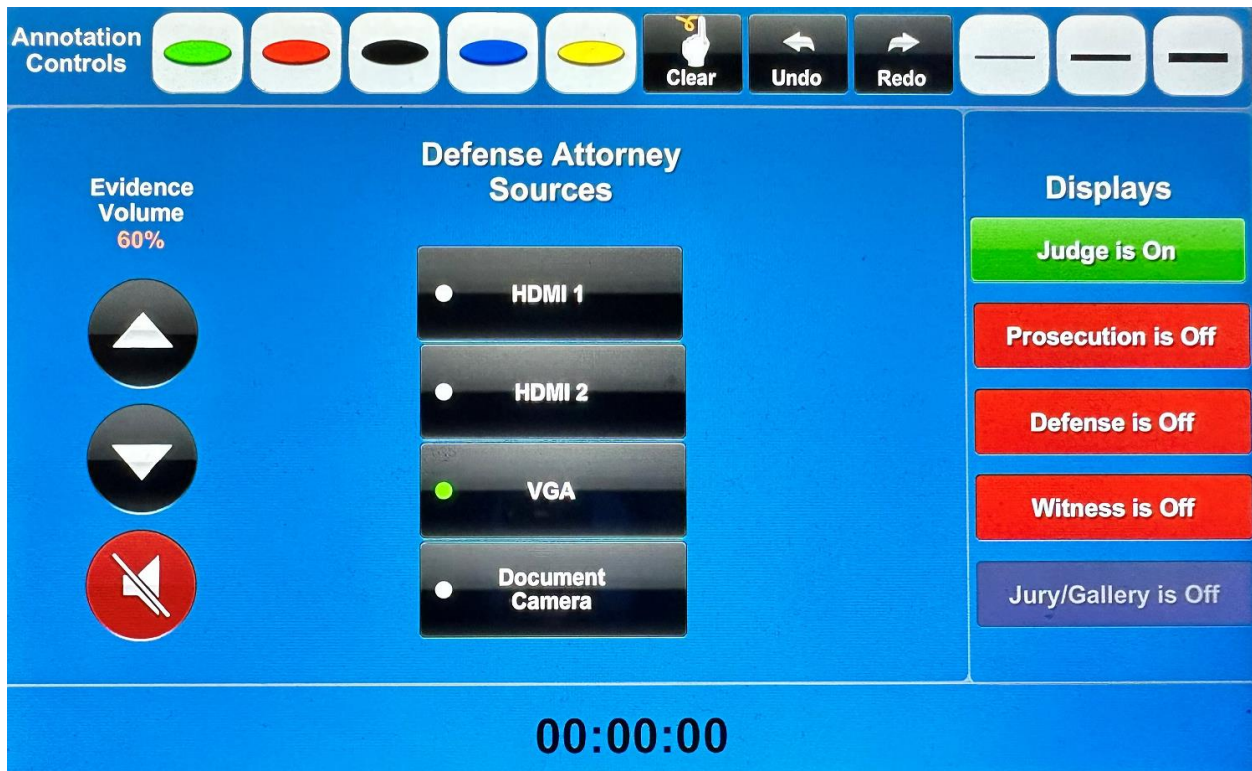

Figure7 -Example Control Panel Display

Figure8 - Display Buttons

Displaying Evidence

STEP 1: Connect the cabling as instructed above in the '*Connecting a Laptop to the Evidence Display*' section.

STEP 2: Select the media source (Document Camera or Laptop) that contains the evidence to be displayed to the court. (*See Figure 7*)

STEP 3: Select who needs to see the evidence. Green= Enabled; Red=Disabled. *(See Figure 8 - Display Buttons)*

NOTE: The judge and the courtroom deputy have master control panels. The courtroom deputy not only powers the system on and off, but they control the volume level of the courtroom microphones. If needed, they can remotely override any activity on the attorney controls.

Use *Figure 9- Display Selection* table below to help determine the display to select depending upon who you want to view the evidence.

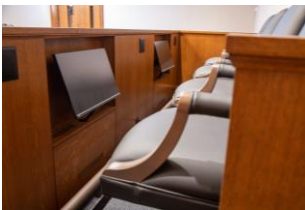| Who	When to Choose
Judge	**Judge monitor and courtroom staff**
Prosecution	**Government or Plaintiff monitors only**
Defense	**Defense monitors only**
Jury	**All Monitors**
Witness	**All Monitors except Jury**

Figure 9 - Display Selection

Witness Stand

The witness stand is equipped with a microphone and an annotation monitor. To display the presented evidence to the witness, select from the evidence display main screen. If the witness inputs annotations, they will automatically display on the selected viewable screens.

Jury Monitors

Flat screen monitors are located in the jury box for jurors to view evidence during a trial. To display the presented evidence on the juror screens, select from the evidence display main screen.

NOTE: This feature is available to attorneys at the Judge's discretion.

ATTORNEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Jury Evidence Recording System (JERS)

The U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina uses the Jury Evidence Recording System (JERS) to capture evidence electronically during a trial.

JERS Website

For requirements on submitting electronic exhibits, file types, formatting instructions, and naming methods, please refer to the JERS website at http://www.ncwd.uscourts.gov/jury-evidence-recording-system-jers

Courtroom Specific Technology Training

It cannot be stressed enough the importance of testing your personal computer and other equipment <u>prior</u> to your court appearance. You can register for hands-on training at http://www.ncwd.uscourts.gov/courtroom-technology.

For additional training questions, contact the Clerk's office at 704-350-7400.

Testing your Equipment Prior to a Court Proceeding

TEST the compatibility of your computer equipment and evidence prior to your appearance in court. Resolving these types of issues beforehand will ensure a speedy and technically efficient trial for all parties.

Things to Consider

- Connect your laptop using the HDMI or VGA cables <u>before</u> powering up your laptop or tablet. Failure to do so may require you to toggle video sources.
- Test all audio and video evidence to make sure it plays through the courtroom equipment. Is the audio clear or loud enough to be heard throughout the court?
- When presenting any video or audio, the volume should be controlled directly from your local computer.
- Does evidence display properly, or should you recreate the evidence in another format?