

## **2024 MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR COVERAGE OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

These guidelines are intended to allow access to the House of Delegates and its members while minimizing distractions and disruptions of the House while in session.

A media applicant for floor privileges must establish to the satisfaction of the Speaker or any such representative he or she may appoint that the applicant is a full-time, paid correspondent who requires on-site access to legislative members. Correspondents must be employed by a news organization whose principal business is the dissemination of original news and opinion of interest to a broad segment of the public, and which has published continuously for 18 months.

Freelance and contract employees must apply for credentials through a sponsoring publication, broadcast outlet or website that meets all media guidelines for coverage of the House of Delegates. In addition to completing the application, a letter of introduction from the sponsoring news outlet's chief editor must be included.

Applicants must not be engaged in any lobbying or paid advocacy, advertising, publicity or promotion work for any individual, political party, corporation, organization or agency of the government, nor in prosecuting any claim before the Legislature or any government department and may not do so while a member of the credentialed media. An applicant's publication must be a general news organization, editorially independent of any institution, foundation or interest group that lobbies the government.

Full-time press floor passes are good for the calendar year, and applications must be submitted anew each year. New passes must be retrieved each year from the Legislature's Office of Reference and Information, but new photos are not required each year. One-day media floor passes are available to journalists who are not regularly assigned to cover the West Virginia Legislature. They may be obtained from the Sergeant-At-Arms or the Communications Director for either the House or the Senate.

All correspondents' cards must be displayed at all times. A press floor pass is NOT required to enter the Capitol complex, the capitol building, nor is it required to conduct interviews in the Great Hall area just outside the entrance to the House Chamber. The House Communications Director is available to help facilitate interviews with all members upon request. Interviews are not permitted inside the Chamber during session, 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start of session or while the House is at ease.

Citizen journalists or anyone employed by a group that lobbies the Legislature may follow proceedings from the gallery. They will have the same access to members as the general public before and after each session day.

Limited seating in the House Chamber and in committee rooms is available for credentialed media on a first-come, first-served basis with each news outlet allotted one seat per meeting unless otherwise permitted in an extenuating circumstance by the Speaker or any such representative he or she may appoint. There are six seats available at the two press tables

located at the front of the House Chamber. Chairs located around the edge of the Chamber are reserved for legislative staff only. If additional seating is required, sections of galleries overlooking the chamber may be reserved to accommodate the press. Media desks in the Chamber shall not be used as workspace outside of session.

Television camera crews should set up in the rear of the chamber, where access to audio equipment is available. No one is permitted to film or record any document or object on the desk of a member unless permission is granted by the member.

Indecorous conduct, boisterousness or unbecoming language, audible remarks, unnecessary conversation, laughter or gestures will not be permitted by credentialed members of the media while in the House Chamber and committee rooms. It is considered a breach of decorum to move about the center aisle of either chamber during floor session or to bring food into the Chamber or committee rooms. Anyone who takes advantage of floor privileges, including media, must obey all applicable [House Rules](#) during sessions. Anyone caught violating House rules is subject to removal from the floor by the Doorkeeper or Sergeant-At-Arms.

Those rules include the following:

- Reporters must wear professional business attire during floor sessions. This includes suit coats and ties for men. Khakis and slacks are acceptable; jeans are prohibited.
  - House rules exempt video and still image photographers from business attire requirements while covering events in the House Chamber, in recognition of the nature of their daily workflow. However, reporters who double as photographers are asked to abide by business attire requirements.
- Reporters are not permitted to approach lawmakers at their desks for any reason while session is taking place nor while the House is at ease. Press should wait to approach members until after a recess or adjournment is declared. Any questions during the floor session should be directed to the House Communications Director.
- Reporters, along with all others granted floor privileges, are asked to limit movement throughout the chamber as much as possible, to allow room for staff, pages and lawmakers to move about as needed.
- No one is permitted to walk between a member who has been recognized to speak and the Speaker. When multiple members have the floor for the purpose of questioning or responding to one another, no one should walk between the line of sight between them.

- The Speaker or the representative he or she appoints shall reserve the right to refuse the issuance of or to revoke media credentials at his or her discretion, in accordance with the published guidelines for media.