

SUPERIOR COURT RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE

Rule 1. Scope of Rules.

These Rules govern the procedure in all suits of a civil nature in the Civil Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia whether cognizable as cases at law or in equity, with the exception of cases in the Landlord and Tenant Branch and the Small Claims and Conciliation Branch of the Court and other exceptions stated in Rule 81. They shall be construed and administered to secure the just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of every action.

COMMENT

This Rule parallels *Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 1* but has been modified to reflect applicability to appropriate cases in the Superior Court. Note that these Rules do not, by their own terms, extend to cases in the Landlord and Tenant Branch or the Small Claims and Conciliation Branch; however, the separate Rules for those respective branches do designate certain of these Rules for incorporation by reference therein. Further, the scope of these Rules will necessarily be expanded in the future as new rules are promulgated to govern procedure in areas (such as probate) over which the court receives jurisdiction in subsequent increments. See D.C. Code (1967 Edition, Supplement IV) § 11-921.

The phrase "these Rules" refers to the entire body of Superior Court Rules of Civil Procedure, those derived from the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and those purely local Rules bearing numbers above 100. Any reference herein to a particular Rule, as, for example, "Rule 69" comprehends both the original Rule and any addenda thereto, e.g., "69-I" and "69-II".

Rule 203. Free press -- Fair trial.

(a) No courthouse personnel, including among others, marshals, court clerks, law clerks, messengers, and court reporters, shall disclose to any person information relating to any civil proceeding that is not part of the public records of the Court without specific authorization of the Court, nor shall any such personnel discuss the merits or personalities involved in any such proceeding with any members of the public.

(b) No photographs, radio or television broadcasts, or tapes for public replay, shall be made inside the courthouse in connection with any civil proceeding, whether or not the Court is in session. Contents of official tapes that are made as a part of the record in a case will be treated in the same manner as official stenographic notes.

(c) No attorney who has undertaken the representation of a litigant in a civil case, whether that case is in progress or imminent, shall release or authorize the release of information not in the public record for dissemination by any means of public communication which is likely to interfere with a fair trial or otherwise prejudice the due administration of justice. No statement shall be disseminated which contains an attorney's opinion as to liability of the parties, credibility of witnesses, motives of the other party, or similar matters bearing on the conduct of the litigation.

(d) In any case which is or is likely to become widely publicized, the Court, on motion of either party or on its own motion, may issue a special order governing such matters as extrajudicial statements by parties and witnesses likely to interfere with the rights of the parties to a fair trial by an impartial jury, the seating and conduct in the courtroom of spectators and news media representatives, the management and sequestration of jurors and witnesses, and any other matters which the Court may deem appropriate for inclusion in such an order.