

HIGH RISK TRIALS

STANDARD NO(S):

NYSSA CS # 25

DATE:

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REFER TO:

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I. OBJECTIVE:

To establish and define the proper course of action to be taken in High Risk Trials and to insure that all court security officers are familiar with that proper course of action.

II. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Seneca County Sheriff's Office to evaluate all trials deemed to be "High Risk" and to organize the proper course of action to effectively provide court security services, insuring the security of the Judge, court personnel, trial participants, jury, and the general public.

III. DETAILS:

A. Operational Plan -

1. The operational plan for a high risk trial will be designed and approved on a situational basis by the Court Security Sergeant, Sheriff and/or Under Sheriff, and the Security Coordinator.
2. Prior to the trial, the Court Security Sergeant will meet with the Security Coordinator and/or the Judge to get recommendations for the security plan.
3. The Court Security Sergeant will coordinate with the Sheriff and arrange for the assistance of other divisions within the Sheriff's office and outside agencies, as required by the operational plan.

B. Command and Coordination -

1. The Court Security Sergeant will:
 - a. Have full authority and responsibility for the operation of a high risk trial.
 - b. Make daily assignments according to the plan and monitor the same.

- c. Coordinate the assistance of involved divisions and outside law enforcement agencies.
- d. Insure that all aspects of the plan are adhered to and provide recommendations to the Sheriff on an as needed basis as to the progress of the proceeding and efficiency of the plan.

C. Courtroom Security -

- 1. Standard court assignments will be in place.
- 2. Additional Court Security Officers will be assigned to handle crowds in the courtroom.
- 3. Additional security for the Judge, witnesses, jury, and in the courtroom may be assigned and will be addressed in the operational plan.
- 4. Courtroom searches will be conducted prior to opening court each day, and whenever the room is vacated.
- 5. Court Security Officers will control and assign spectator seating in the courtroom and there will be no movement from assigned seating.
- 6. Media may be assigned their own section, if there are several media personnel present.
- 7. The courtroom will be locked during lunch breaks and extended recesses.
- 8. Security officers assigned to the magnetometer/X-ray screening station will insure that no displays relating to the trial are brought into the courthouse. Including, but not limited to, T-shirts, posters, newspapers, etc.
- 9. One or more of the following procedures may be added as part of the operational plan:
 - a. Patrol and search by Court Security Officers of areas surrounding the courthouse;
 - b. Additional monitoring of entrances;
 - c. Additional interior building patrols and fixed security posts.

D. Security of Judges -

1. In addition to normal security procedures, the following may be part of the high risk security plan:
 - a. Provide secure parking for the Judge's vehicle;
 - b. Escort or driver made available to the Judge;
 - c. Judge's home security may utilize surveillance or the placing of security personnel in the residence;
 - d. A security escort to monitor all movement of the Judge within the courthouse. All public areas to be avoided.

E. Security of Juries -

1. Normal security procedures for the guarding and transporting of juries will be in place with the possible addition of the following:
 - a. Juror parking established in the designated secured area, and monitored;
 - b. Escort of jurors to and from parking area;
 - c. Escort jurors for all movement within the courthouse, utilizing secured elevator and halls, avoiding the public areas;
 - d. Additional security provided during sequestration and transportation.

F. Security of Defendant -

1. The Court Security Sergeant will coordinate all in-custody defendant transportation issues with the Security Coordinator, Judge, Sheriff, and/or Corrections Lieutenant.
2. The Corrections Division has authority and is responsible for guarding and transporting "in-custody" defendants.
3. The additional courthouse security in place for high risk trials should afford ample security for an "out-of-custody" defendant. Additional security measures may be provided with the approval of the presiding Judge.

G. Security of Witnesses – In addition to normal security procedures, the following may be utilized for the protection and security of witnesses:

1. Provide secure parking for witness vehicles;
2. Escort the witness to and from the Courthouse
3. Arrange with the District Attorney's Office for the transport of witnesses to the Courthouse in the event they are unable to drive or find transportation.
4. Escort witnesses to and from various courtrooms where their testimony is expected to be given.

H. Media Policy -

1. A major security, high-risk trial will generate interest from the media. It is the policy of the SCSO that a fair and impartial policy be in effect which offers accredited media representatives equal consideration for event coverage within the limits of security planning.
2. In courtroom audio and/or video coverage will be allowed ONLY with the approval of the presiding Judge and only within the guidelines set forth by the State of New York Unified Court System.
3. With the approval of the presiding Judge, special consideration as to seating will be granted to media representatives.
4. If the operational plan identifies the need to segregate media representatives to one area of the courtroom, court officers will assign and control that area.

NOTE: Court officers are prohibited from discussing trial related matters with the news media. All inquiries will be referred to the Court Security Sergeant who will channel inquiries for information to the proper designated source (E.G. Chief Clerk, Sheriff, or designee). This policy is in effect to protect the integrity of the judicial process as well as to protect the individual officer from difficult situations. (See “**PUBLIC INFORMATION & COMMUNITY RELATIONS**”), this manual.