



KEY CHANGES TO NEW ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT EXTENDED MEDIA COVERAGE POLICY FOR CIRCUIT COURTS

EFFECTIVE JAN. 1, 2026

1. **Allow media to request EMC statewide.**
 - a. EMC is currently limited to certain counties or courthouses in certain circuits.
 - b. The judge presiding over the proceeding continues to maintain discretion to deny the request or grant it with reasonable restrictions.
2. **Reason if denied:** If EMC is denied, the judge must provide a reason in the order.
3. **EMC points of contact:** The reliance on circuit-wide media coordinators has become less practical as newsrooms shrink across Illinois. To address this issue, we redefined “media coordinator” and have established the role of “court media liaison” to assist in facilitating EMC.
4. **News Media Redefined:** A more robust definition of news media has been approved.
 - a. Current: “News Media”, in general, means established news gathering and reporting agencies and their representatives whose function is to inform the public.
 - b. New: “News media” means a newspaper or other periodical issued at regular intervals whether in print or electronic format, a news service whether in print or electronic format, a radio station, a television station, a television network, a community antenna television service, or a person or corporation that, in a professional capacity, produces news content aimed at informing the public. In determining whether a requestor fits the definition of news media, these factors should be considered:
 - A requestor’s membership in a news/media trade or industry organization;
 - A requestor’s personal connection to the proceeding;
 - A requestor’s editorial process, which should promote accountability and adherence to extended media coverage policies, rules, and content-sharing (pooling) obligations; and
 - How the requestor, if granted access, would impact a party’s right to a fair trial.
5. **Timing of requests**
 - a. EMC request timeframe shortened from 14 to 7 days.
 - b. Objection from parties changed to “within 3 days of receiving notice of the request”.
6. **No more reporting** – The quarterly tracking requirement has been eliminated. This was part of the original pilot program and is no longer necessary as EMC is well established.
7. **Standardized forms** – This was a frequent request from the town hall and surveys to promote uniformity statewide.