

About the Courtroom:

- There are microphones in the courtroom to assist with victim/witness testimony.
- Courtroom security is the responsibility of courtroom bailiffs, who are usually in the courtroom at all times during a judicial hearing.
- If a defendant is in custody, s/he will be held in a secure holding area in the courtroom. A member of the Sheriff's Department will always be present with an incarcerated defendant.
- It is important to be quiet while court is in session. For that reason, try not to bring children with you to court.

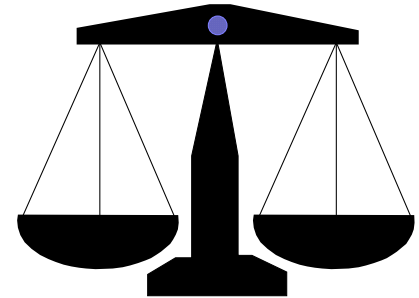
PORTSMOUTH DISTRICT COURT VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Kristin Maki
Victim/Witness Advocate
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This Project was supported by the Violence
Against Women Grants Office, Office of Justice
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Hampshire Department of Justice

TIPS ON TESTIFYING

*Helping Victims/Witnesses
During the Trial Process*



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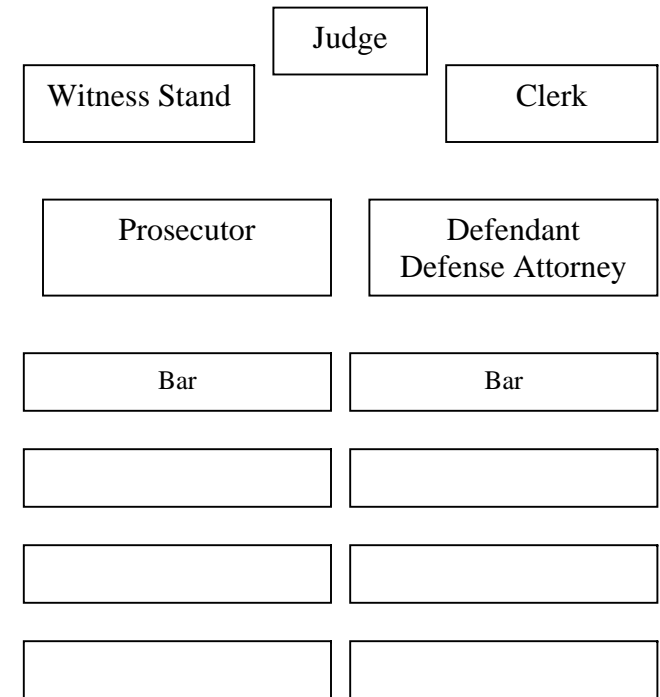
Portsmouth Police Department
3 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

WITNESS GUIDELINES FOR TESTIFYING

- Tell the truth. Answer the questions to the best of your memory.
- Don't guess. Give facts and not opinions. If you don't know the answer, say "I don't remember."
- Do not go the other extreme and answer "I don't remember" to every question. Do not say, "I don't remember" as a shield to protect yourself from the questioner.
- Speak clearly and loudly enough so that the farthest person in the courtroom can hear you. Do not nod your head "yes" or "no." You are being recorded, and your answers must be clear enough to be understood on tape.
- If the question is about distance or time and your answer is only an estimate, be sure you say it is only an estimate.
- If there is an objection from either the prosecutor or the defense attorney, stop your answer immediately and wait until the Judge directs you to answer the question.
- Take your time. Think before you speak. If you do not understand the question, ask to have it repeated.

- Make sure to always stay as calm as possible. Sometimes defense lawyers will try to make you angry and the worst thing you can do is react to that.
- If a question is hard to answer because it is embarrassing to talk about, say so.
- Do not feel you have to justify or explain your actions. You are not on trial.
- If you are sure about something, stick to your beliefs. Do not be "talked into" a different answer. You may correct or disagree with the attorney asking the question.
- Do not exaggerate.
- Do not chew gum. Dress neatly.
- If you make a mistake when answering, correct it immediately.
- Be serious. The judge might misunderstand laughing and joking around.
- The Defendant will be in the courtroom while you testify. The defendant is not allowed to speak to you.
- It is normal to feel nervous. Try to relax as much as possible.

Court Room Diagram



Public Seating