

Rules for
**Electronic Media
Coverage**
of Congress

2009

ISSUED UNDER THE DIRECTION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE CONGRESSIONAL RADIO-TELEVISION
CORRESPONDENTS' GALLERIES

Overview

Congress requires that all members of the electronic media covering news events on Capitol Hill be accredited by the Radio-Television Correspondents Galleries.

The Radio-TV Correspondents Galleries were created by the Congress to act on its behalf to facilitate members of the electronic media covering news events on Capitol Hill.

Gallery credentials are required for news coverage inside the Capitol or on the Capitol grounds. Out of town reporters are not eligible for regular membership and should contact the House or Senate Gallery staffs for temporary credentials.

House Gallery: 202-225-5214

Senate Gallery: 202-224-6421

Rules of Congress prohibit Gallery members from engaging in lobbying, advertising, publicity or promotion work for any individual, corporation, organization or government.

Current Members of Congress and the Vice President may be invited to speak in the Senate and House studios. Only Members of Congress may be interviewed in the House and Senate Gallery studios, booths and in the Capitol Visitor Center.

News coverage is regulated by the following rules. Please refer to the appropriate section of this manual for the full statement of each rule.

Quick Reference

- Videotaping and stakeouts in the Capitol and the Congressional complex require permission and are prohibited outright in some areas.
- Gallery members should keep safety in mind when walking in front of or behind a subject while recording audio or shooting video anywhere inside the Congressional complex.
- There are designated locations outside and inside which may be used at any time by members of the Gallery for stand-ups or interviews. (See maps on pages 16 & 16.)
- Shooting video on the Capitol grounds with a tripod requires permission, except in designated locations. (See maps on pages 15 & 16.)
- Shooting video outside with portable equipment is generally unrestricted unless it impedes the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- Shooting video on the steps on the East Front and on the West Front of the Capitol is prohibited.
- Coverage of House and Senate hearings must be arranged through the appropriate Gallery.
- Pool coverage may be mandated in cases of heavily attended hearings.
- You may not shoot live or recorded video images in the following areas:
 - In the House and Senate chambers.
 - Anywhere Congressional regulations prohibit video coverage such as House and Senate restaurants and cafeterias, some corridors on the second and third floors outside the House and Senate chambers, and areas closed to the public, etc.

General Rules

Videotaping and audio recording are permitted in the public areas of the House and Senate office buildings. **Gallery members must follow the directions of the Gallery staffs at all times.**

Only current Members of Congress and the Vice President may be interviewed or make statements in the House and Senate Gallery studios or in other parts of the Galleries. (House committee witnesses may be interviewed in the House Gallery and Rayburn Studio on the day they are scheduled to testify.) The restriction does not apply to interviews given by credentialed members of the Congressional News Galleries.

Members of Congress (except the Speaker of the House, the House Majority and Minority Leaders, the Vice President, and Senate Majority and Minority Leaders) must be invited to appear in the House and Senate Gallery studios. Appearances on the House side must be at the invitation of a member of the Radio-Television Galleries. Appearances on the Senate side may be at the invitation of any member of any Congressional News Gallery. Members of the Galleries who issue invitations for news conferences must be present in the Galleries during interviews.

News conferences with Senators and Representatives in their respective Galleries take precedence over other uses of the studios.

The House and Senate Gallery studios are open to accredited reporters and technicians, Members of Congress, Congressional press secretaries, and gallery staff. Additional Congressional staff may accompany their Members in the House and Senate Gallery Studios at the discretion of the Gallery staff if space allows.

Interviews given by credentialed members of the Congressional News Galleries are permitted in the House and Senate studios and the Rayburn studio with prior clearance with Gallery staff.

Gallery members may not list Gallery addresses or the main phone numbers of the Galleries on their business cards or stationery. Booth occupants must also have an office outside the Capitol.

House and Senate rules require appropriate and professional attire for access to the Speaker's Lobby and the Senate Chamber. (For example, men are required to wear jacket and tie, and women may wear suits, skirts and slacks)

Congressional Radio-TV Gallery credentials may be used only when covering news stories. They may not be used to gain access to Capitol grounds or buildings when working for non-news clients or for other purposes unrelated to news coverage.

Rules of Congress prohibit Gallery members from engaging in lobbying, advertising, publicity, or promotion work for any individual, corporation, organization or government.

Interviews with non-members and officials are permitted at authorized stakeout areas except for at the Senate policy luncheon stakeout – non members of Congress must be escorted by a Congressional member to the microphone.

Equipment must not be left unattended.

SECTION 1

Portable Television Coverage

The Capitol Grounds - Use of portable equipment is not restricted except when it impedes the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic, or creates a safety concern, or in heightened security situations when press may be restricted to certain areas.

East Front - Portable coverage for interviews is allowed at the base of the House, Senate and Center steps. Approval of the Member is required. News organizations must notify the House Gallery and Senate Gallery of coverage plans.

West Front - Portable coverage is allowed at the base of the steps and in the grassy areas. News organizations must notify the Galleries of coverage plans.

Arrival Shots - Portable arrival shots are allowed. There are two pre-designated locations on the East Front near both Carriage Entrances which require approval of the appropriate Sergeant At Arms and the Galleries (see stakeout and photo op rules).

Portable Interviews - In the House and Senate office building corridors. Approval of specific Member's office is required. Equipment is not restricted as long as it does not impede the flow of pedestrian traffic.

Television Coverage on Tripod

In the House and Senate Gallery Studios -

Reserved for exclusive use through the Gallery staffs.

Designated Free Press Areas on Capitol grounds

(See maps on pages 15 & 16) - Gallery members may set up tripods in these locations for stand-ups or interviews without prior approval.

Areas of the Capitol grounds other than Free

Press Areas - For use of tripods, a Capitol Police tripod permit is required. Contact the appropriate Gallery for assistance.

Inside the Russell Rotunda area on the third floor and outside the Russell Rotunda balconies

- Balcony positions must be reserved through the Senate Gallery staff.

Inside the Cannon Rotunda area on the third floor and outside the Cannon Rotunda balconies

- Balcony positions must be reserved through the House Gallery staff.

In the Capitol Rotunda - Approval of Congressional officials through both the House and Senate Galleries required.

In Statuary Hall - Approval of the Speaker's Office through the House Gallery is required.

In the Old Supreme Court Chamber and the Old Senate Chamber - Approval of the Senate Curator through the Senate Gallery is required.

In the Rayburn Room - Approval of the Speaker's Office through the House Gallery is required.

In open Congressional Committee Hearings - Approval of the Committee through the appropriate Gallery is required.

In Members' Offices - Approval from Member's press office required. Tripod interviews with Members in House office building corridors need approval of the House Sergeant At Arms through the House Gallery. Tripod interviews with Members in Senate office building corridors need approval of the Senate Rules Committee through the Senate Gallery.

In Capitol Building Corridors - Approval of Congressional officials through the appropriate Gallery is required.

In the Senate Reception Room for interviews with Senators - Approval of the Senate Sergeant At Arms through the Senate Gallery is required. Tripod set up is allowed at stake-out locations that have been approved by the appropriate Gallery. Check with appropriate Gallery for details.

In the Capitol Subways - Restrictions vary according to location. Approval of Congressional Officials through the appropriate Gallery is required.

SECTION 2

Stake-out and Photo Op Rules

All stake-outs must be pre-approved by the appropriate Gallery. The only exceptions are stake-outs in the designated Free Press Areas (see Section 5 on page 12). Some stake-outs and photo ops require Gallery escorts. Contact the appropriate Gallery for details.

- Camera positions will generally be assigned on a first come, first served basis; however, the Gallery staff may give preferred positions to organizations providing live or pool coverage.
- Mobile cutaway cameras are permitted at stake-outs as long as the camera does not interfere with other participants.
- Stakeouts must allow for traffic flow in corridors and should not block doorways.
- Reporters and producers are not required to remain inside the stakeout area.
- Unattended tripods may not be used to reserve camera positions at stake-outs.
- Food and drink are not permitted at stake-outs in the Capitol Building and Capitol Visitors Center. Gallery members must clean up after themselves in stake-out areas.
- RTCA members must notify the House Gallery staff in order to use the permanent stakeout area outside the House Chamber opposite the Will Rogers statue.
- At the stake-out area in the Hall of Columns on the first floor of the Capitol near the South Door. Approval of the House Sergeant At Arms through the House Gallery is required.

SECTION 3

Radio Coverage

Radio coverage is allowed throughout the Capitol complex and the Capitol Visitor Center subject to the following rules:

On the second floor of the Senate wing -

Extending from the President's Room, around the corner through the Ohio Clock Corridor, past the East Grand Staircase, including the bank of elevators and the Senate Reception Room.

On the second floor of the House wing - All hallways surrounding the House Chamber.

In the Speaker's Lobby - At either end of the lobby around the reporters' tables.

In the Rayburn Room - Only when the House is not in session.

In the Old Supreme Court - Approval is through the Senate Curator. Contact the Senate Radio-TV Gallery to request approval.

In the Old Senate Chamber - Approval is through the Senate Curator. Contact the Senate Radio-TV Gallery to request approval.

In Members offices - Approval from Member's press office is required.

On Capitol grounds - Interviews must not interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

SECTION 4

Rules for Broadcast Coverage of House and Senate Committee Hearings

You must notify the appropriate Gallery of your intentions to cover a hearing so that the Gallery staff may make the necessary arrangements.

- All electronic equipment must be installed at least 15 minutes before the hearing is scheduled to begin. If you are late, you may not be allowed to set up.
- Camera positions will be generally assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. However, the Gallery staff may give preferred tripod positions to organizations providing live, pool, or gavel-to-gavel coverage.

Each committee has its own coverage rules. In general, tripods and microphones may not be broken down or removed during a hearing except during a break or recess in the hearing. Cameras may be removed from tripods for cutaways in some hearing rooms.

Broadcast technicians must maintain decorum at all times and conduct themselves in a way that does not interfere with the hearing.

Unattended tripods may not be used to reserve camera positions inside a committee hearing room.

Many Congressional committees prohibit food and drink in their hearing rooms.

Rules for cutaway crews during hearings vary, depending on the committee. In crowded hearings, crews may be required to rotate into the room to shoot cutaways.

SECTION 5

Free Press Areas

Free press areas are designated for stand up use at all times. Credentialed members of the press may use these areas at all times. Crews may set up tripods in these areas without obtaining tripod permits.

Videotaping or filming with a tripod in any other area requires a tripod permit. Approval through the appropriate Gallery is needed. Tripods are to be set up only on grassy areas (except at the location near the fountain).

Please refer to the maps on pages 15 & 16 for the locations of the Free Press Areas.

SECTION 6

Decorum Statement

All members of the Radio and Television Correspondents' Galleries are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner when working in the House and Senate Gallery workspaces and studios.

SECTION 7

Use of House Studio by Congressional Staff

Congressional staff may not occupy space on the media camera riser. If a floor position becomes available at the base of the platform, Gallery staff will oversee placement of one staff video camera, provided their Member is the lead participant (or designee) in the event.

Memo

Interacting With The Media

Memo by US Capitol Police Chief Terrance W. Gainer to members of the US Capitol Police Force

19 August 2005

The members of the press who cover Congress play a unique role to our democratic system of government. Whether they are writing press, radio or television reporters, camera operators, or audio technicians, they serve as the eyes and ears of the public. They freely report on the workings of the House and Senate as well as the efforts of individual members of Congress to address the issues of the day.

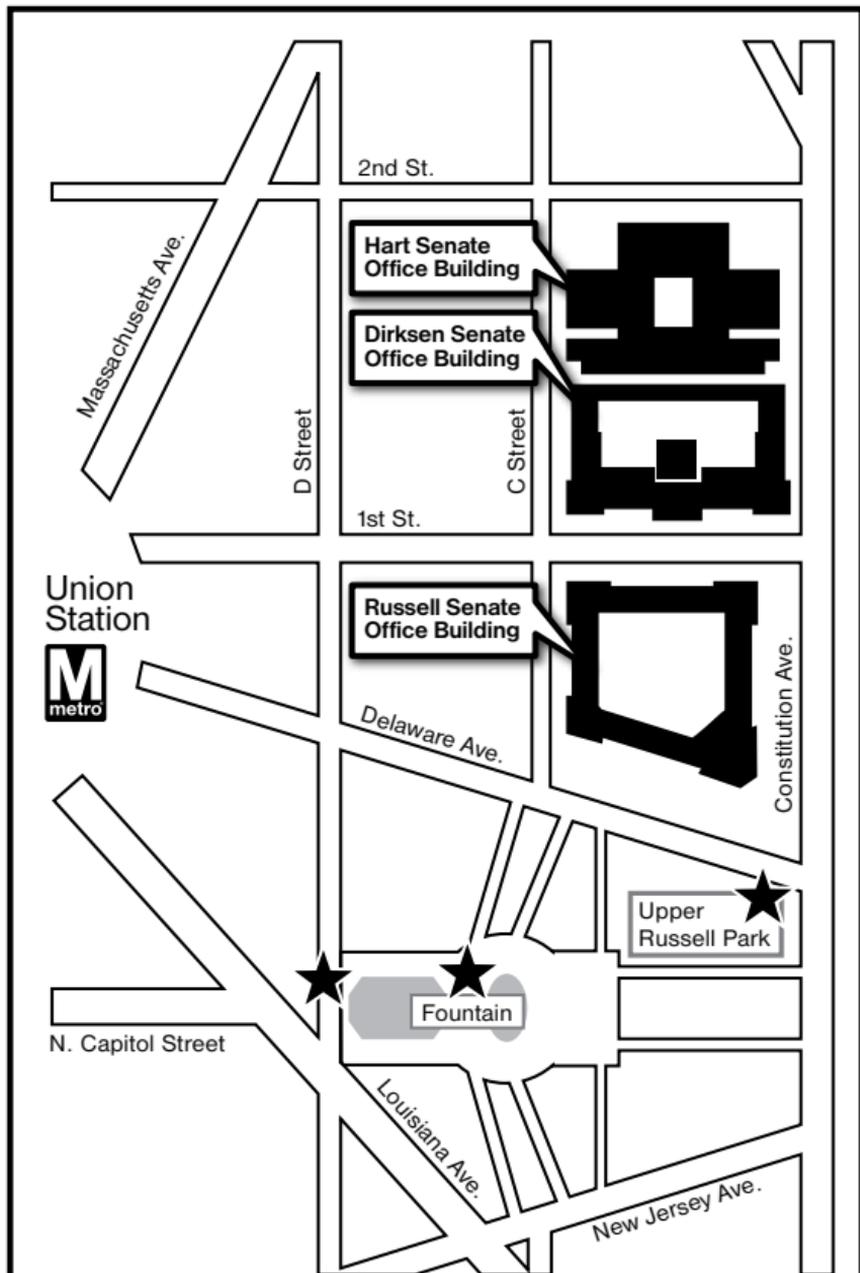
In the course of carrying out our respective responsibilities, members of the Department and members of the press frequently interact. In fact, the U.S. Capitol Police probably has more daily interaction with the press than any other law enforcement agency in the nation. Aside from covering Congress, the media are also very interested in major incidents involving the USCP. It is not unusual for several camera crews, photographers, and reporters to show up on the scene while we are trying to attend to law enforcement and emergency operations. Therefore, it is important for all of our personnel to work to assist the media in obtaining information at the scene of the incident while ensuring police operations are not hindered.

The following general guidelines should be used in dealing with the media. A Public Information Officer (PIO) may be requested through Communications if the situation warrants.

- The media has at least the same rights as the public to take photographs or shoot video in or from public areas with handheld cameras
- If an incident or event should cause a group of media to assemble, a press area should be established that is close enough to permit a view of the scene without interfering with operations. The press area should be inside the outer perimeter in an area closer than the general public is permitted to enter.
- If members of the media choose not to stay inside the press area, they may go anywhere the general public is allowed to go, provided they don't block streets, sidewalks, hallways, etc.
- Members of the media may be asked/directed to move if they are in an area of immediate danger, in a crime scene, or in an area where their presence would hinder police operations.
- Under no circumstances should a member of the USCP place their hand over a camera lens or otherwise attempt to obstruct the media's view of a scene.
- Absent a Department PIO, supervisors should assist in the management of media requests and presence.

If there are any additional questions/concerns, please contact the Public Information Office at 202-224-1677.

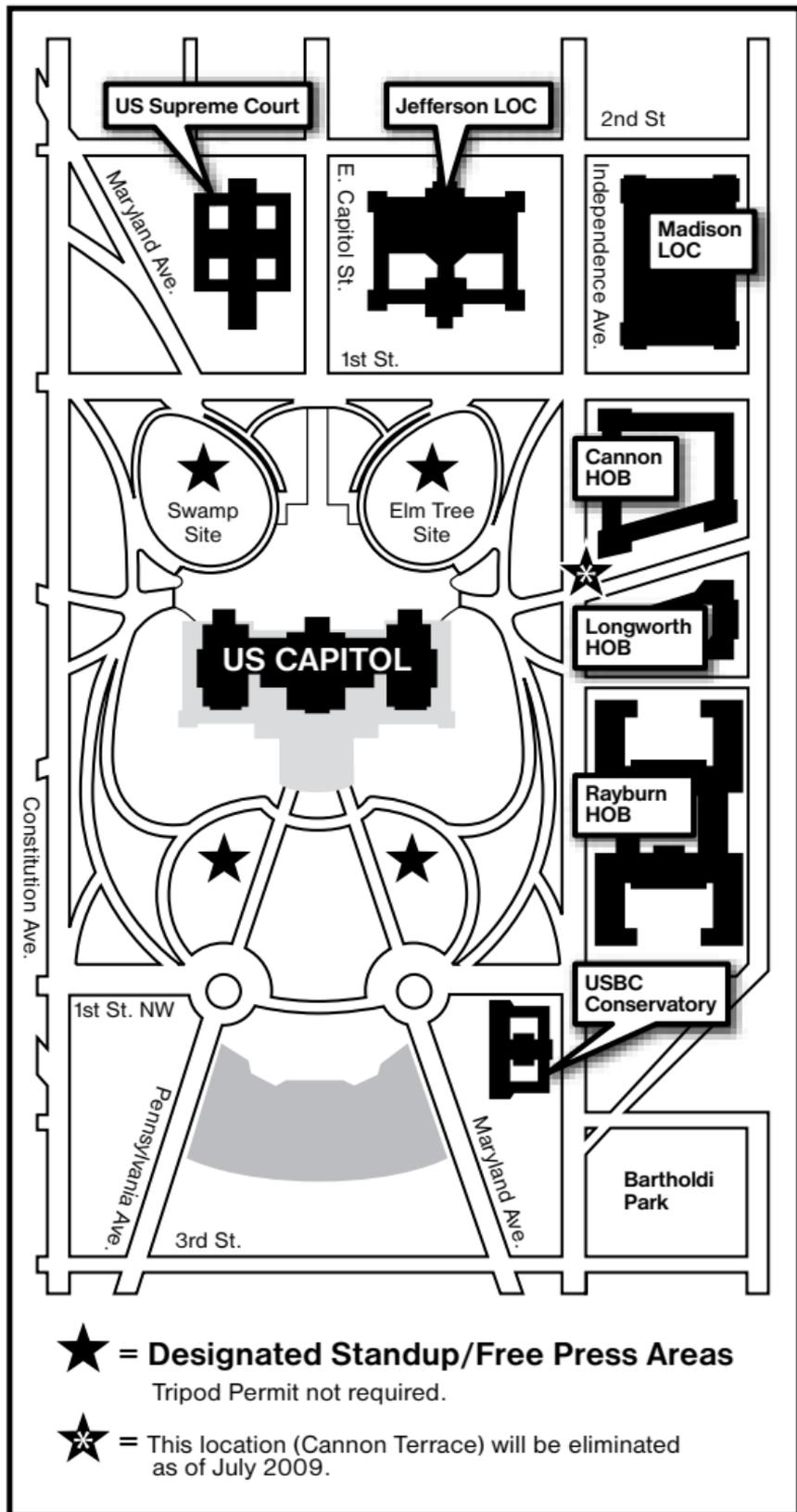
Terrence W. Gainer



★ = Free Press Areas

Bonafide members of Congressional Radio/TV galleries may use these areas without a tripod permit. Videotaping or filming with a tripod in any other area requires a tripod permit which must be obtained from the U.S. Capitol Police, Capitol Division (Room ST-3, U.S. Capitol Building). Tripods are to be set up only on grassy areas (except at the location near the fountain).

General Order 402.1



Additional Information

Senate Radio-TV Gallery

Room S-325, Capitol Building – 202-224-6421

Room SD-G40, Dirksen Building

<http://www.senate.gov/galleries/radiotv/>

Senate Democratic Recording – 202-224-8541

Senate Republican Recording – 202-224-8601

House Radio-TV Gallery

Room H-321, Capitol Building – 202-225-5214

Room B-365, Rayburn Building – 202-225-7134

<http://www.house.gov/radiotv/index.html>

House Democratic Recording – 202-225-7400

House Republican Recording – 202-225-7430

Updates

These rules (and any subsequent updates, addendums or modifications) will be posted at:

[**http://radiotv.house.gov/gallery-use/rules.shtml**](http://radiotv.house.gov/gallery-use/rules.shtml)