

INFORMATION ON HOW TO OBSERVE A COURT HEARING

As of March 14, 2011 the San Francisco Immigration Court no longer is able to coordinate the advanced approval for observation of cases for law students, attorneys, law schools or other interested parties. This change was needed due to limited court staff resources and an increase in requests. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause; however, interested parties may still continue to observe court hearings by following the procedures below.

Persons interested in observing a court hearing may do so by personally coming to the Immigration Court any day between Monday-Thursday. **Daily dockets of scheduled hearings are posted on the bulletin boards located on the wall of the 8th and 9th floor waiting areas. Most cases begin at 8:30am and 1:00pm.** Observers may choose any scheduled hearing listed on the calendar and walk into the courtroom. We ask that observers make themselves known to the judge and parties prior to the start of the hearing to advise them of their purpose. Observers must request and receive approval from the judge and parties to observe the hearing.

Please note that certain cases may be closed to the public, and anyone wanting to observe a hearing must receive approval from the judge and parties prior to the start of the hearing in order to remain in the courtroom. If for any reason any one of the parties does not allow the observer to remain in the courtroom, the observer must leave and find another hearing to attend. If this happens, we ask that you enter a new courtroom quietly as proceedings may have already started.

Some Immigration hearings may be closed to the public because:

- The immigration judge closed the hearing to protect witnesses, parties, or the public interest;
- The immigration judge granted a motion the parties filed to close a hearing; or
- The case involves an abused spouse or child; Information that is protected by a protective order; or
- The case involves an application for asylum, withholding of removal relief, or Convention Against Torture protections

*When courtroom space is limited, the news media and court personnel have priority over the general public.

WHERE TO OBSERVE HEARINGS

Court Locations- Immigration Court, 100 Montgomery Street, 7th, 8th and 9th floors, San Francisco, CA 94104 or the Detained Immigration Court Facility, 630 Sansome Street, 4th Floor, Room 475, San Francisco, CA 94111

Lobby Entrance- All visitors must present a valid identification card, or driver's license to the lobby attendant of the building. Visitors at the Montgomery Street location will be required to sign-in with the lobby attendant.

Security Procedures- All visitors to the Court must undergo a security screening through a metal detector machine as well as a handbag screening each time they visit the Court. Visitors must not bring any cameras, video or recording equipment, as they are not allowed in the courtrooms. We ask that observers arrive at least 20 minutes prior to the start of the hearing, so that they will have enough time to clear security.

Cell Phone Policy- Visitors to the court must turn off their cell phones or turn them to the silent mode when entering all courtrooms. Cell phone usage will be allowed in the waiting room and elevator lobby areas only.

Hearing Information- The Court holds master and individual hearings Monday-Friday. However, we do not recommend that observers come on Friday as that is the lightest day of the week and they may not find a hearing to observe.

Updated 3/2/16