

Winnipeg Law Courts Tours and Judicial Speaking Requests

Law Courts Tours – 408 York Avenue, Winnipeg

Generally, tour times are 9:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. Monday to Thursday. The tour is approximately 45 minutes and includes a review of the court cases scheduled for that day so that, following the tour, students can go and observe court proceedings (usually criminal cases). No more than thirty people are permitted in a tour group. For the court observation part of the visit, students will be asked to break into smaller groups (6-10 students).

The Law Courts open at 8:30 a.m. Students should arrive 15 minutes prior to the tour beginning to allow ample time to assemble and pass through security. Perimeter security is in place at the Law Courts and requires visitors to step through a scanner with bags and/or purses scanned separately (similar to airport security). Any item that may be considered a potential weapon will not be permitted into the Law Courts and will be confiscated, e.g. scissors, nail files.

Restrictions:

- Cameras are not permitted in the Law Courts.
Special: The only time the Court has approved/permitted cameras into the courthouse is for judicial Swearing In Ceremonies and during Open House for Law Day. Even then their use is restricted to certain areas of the courthouse for security reasons.
- Cell phones with cameras are permitted in the courthouse with restrictions, namely, the camera portion is not to be used anywhere within the Law Courts Complex. If observed using the camera, the person will be asked to leave and will only be allowed back into the courthouse without the camera cell phone.
All cell phones, with or without cameras, must be turned off before entering any courtroom.
Special: If a judge orders the exclusion of all cell phones from his/her courtroom, a Sheriff Officer will conduct a secondary scan and persons carrying cell phones will be denied entry.
- Food or drink - is not permitted in the courtrooms.

Once through security and the students are assembled, the tour group can simply wait to meet their tour guide on the main floor of the law courts building. The tour consists of attending a courtroom of each level of court in Manitoba and information about the role and general workings of each court, number of judges, etc. A viewing of the Great Library (law library) is also included and affords an opportunity to discuss the common law system.

Courtroom Observation

While most courtrooms are open to the public, those dealing with child protection cases are not. Tour groups are not to go to courtrooms 410 and 412 as they tend to deal with child protection cases.

Judicial Speaking Requests

The judges of Manitoba's two trial courts (Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench and the Provincial Court of Manitoba) look forward to the opportunity of speaking directly with your Senior 1 through 4 students about the role of the courts in Canada's justice system from the "hands on" perspective of a judge. Sometimes the roles of legislators and of the judiciary in the development and application of our laws are unclear and one of the goals of the judiciary in speaking with students is to clarify the differences between these two important branches of our democratic government. The other goal is to share with students the day-to-day realities of being a judge.

A typical visit is for one hour. The judge will introduce himself/herself and discuss the types of duties a judge has and the role of the judiciary within the broader legal system; the relationship of the judiciary with the legislative and executive branches of government; and the relationship between the judiciary and other justice system components such as law enforcement agencies and public prosecutions. The majority of the visit is then left for students to ask their questions. An important caveat respecting questions from students is that judges are not able to answer any questions that relate to a case that is or may be before the court.

Speaking requests are to be made through the Executive Assistant to the Chief Justices and Chief Judge when scheduling a tour. In that case, following the tour, 15 minutes will be allocated for the judge to come by and speak with the students before the students go off to observe court.

To schedule a tour (with or without a speaking request), please call 945-8043.

CONTACT: Executive Assistant to the
Chief Justices and Chief Judge
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