

# Media Guide



## Virginia General Assembly

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Senate of Virginia  
and the House of Delegates

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## **PRESS PASSES**

Press passes are provided to journalists whose primary responsibility is coverage of Virginia state government and the Virginia General Assembly. Applicants must be full-time, paid correspondents employed by a news organization that is: (a) a general circulation newspaper that has been published for at least 52 weeks consecutively, (b) a public or commercial radio or television station with regularly scheduled news programming, or (c) a news organization whose principle business is the daily dissemination of original news of interest to a broad segment of the public, and which has broadcast or published (online or in print) continuously for 52 weeks. The news organization must (i) work independently of any government, industry, or institution and (ii) not engage, directly or indirectly, in any lobbying, political activity, or other activity intended to influence elections or any matter before the General Assembly or before any independent agency, or any department or other instrumentality of the Executive Branch.

A press pass, which allows access to the General Assembly Building and Capitol, is available from the House of Delegates Support Services by completing an application, presenting valid identification issued by your organization, and providing a photograph (headshot) for the badge. Please contact Jay Braxton at (804) 698-1551 or e-mail [jbraxton@house.virginia.gov](mailto:jbraxton@house.virginia.gov) for more information or to schedule an appointment. It may take up to a week for your application to be approved and for your badge to be issued. Press passes for specific events are valid for that event only and general passes are good for one year from the issue date. "Day passes" are available to journalists who are not regularly assigned to cover the Virginia General Assembly. Reporters requesting a "day pass" must meet the same criteria as defined in the first paragraph of this section.

## **PRESS ROOMS**

House and Senate feeds are available in the Capitol and General Assembly Building press rooms.

Anyone wishing to occupy press space in either Press Room must contact the Virginia Capitol Correspondents Association at [officers@vapress.org](mailto:officers@vapress.org).

## **DRESS CODE**

All reporters and camera operators are required to dress appropriately (business attire) when working in either chamber. Specifically, a blazer, collared shirt, and tie are required for all men for access to the House and Senate Chamber Floors.

Denim of any kind is not appropriate attire.

Those who are not appropriately attired will not be allowed in the Chamber; however, they may be seated in the Gallery if there is space available.

## SENATE CHAMBER COVERAGE

### **ACCESS**

- Press access to the floor of the Senate is a privilege. Disturbing the decorum of the Chamber shall result in dismissal and loss of future access.
- Limited seating is provided for reporters and photographers on the floor in the front of the Chamber. Seating is on a first come, “first-seated” basis. These seats are reserved for working representatives of independent news organizations.
- Reporters may sit at the chairs on either side of the “well.” Media desks in the Senate Chamber shall not be used as office space after session. Media should complete their work and exit Chambers within 10 minutes of adjournment.
- If floor seating is not available, reporters may go to the Senate Gallery press area. Do not place anything on the Gallery railing. Bloggers are also invited to sit in the Gallery.
- The use of cellular telephones and audible electronic devices are prohibited in the Senate Chamber.
- The Sergeant-at-Arms may limit news media access to the floor and Gallery due to crowded conditions.

### **INTERVIEWS**

You may request through the Sergeant-At-Arms to have a Senator step outside the Chamber for an interview at any time. Conversations must be outside the Chamber.

Interviews are not allowed in the Chamber:

- During the daily session.
- Fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled start of the daily session.
- Five minutes after the adjournment of the session.
- While the Senate is at ease or in recess.

## **SENATE CHAMBER COVERAGE (cont.)**

### **MOVING WITHIN THE SENATE CHAMBER**

- The interior aisles are strictly off-limits except to General Assembly members and staff during the daily session.
- Walk around the perimeter of the Chamber to get to and from the designated press areas. Do not walk in the “well” to get from one side to the other.
- Do not block the view of the members, Lt. Governor, or staff.

Members of the media may not request assistance from the senate desk staff during the session.

Press shall refrain from approaching desk staff 30 minutes before and 15 minutes after session to allow staff time for session preparation and wrap-up.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO**

- Do not use lights, flashes, or tripods on the floor of the Chamber.
- During the session, photographs and video may be shot from the area to the right or left of the “well,” but only from a kneeling position.
- Still photographers may transfer from one side of the “well” to the other while in a crouching position.
- Photographers may also shoot from the area designated for press.
- During the Morning Hour only, photographers may shoot from the corner of the Chamber to the Page bench beside the podium.
- Do not block the Pages’ access to the Senators.
- When using hand-held television cameras, use extreme caution not to block the view of members, the Lt. Governor, and staff.

## **SENATE CHAMBER COVERAGE (cont.)**

- Primary television camera coverage of the debate should be from the Gallery or the press room feeds.
- All television cameras in the Gallery must be secured on tripods.
- Limited audio and video drops are available in the Capitol and General Assembly Building press rooms.
- See Addendum for Senate Chamber Diagram, page 14.

If you have any questions, please see the Sergeant-at-Arms or call the Clerk of the Senate at 804-698-7400.

The Clerk of the Senate shall be the arbiter of these protocols.



## **HOUSE CHAMBER COVERAGE**

Limited seating is provided for reporters and photographers on the floor of the Chamber. There are a total of ten (10) press seats provided in the rear of the Chamber. These seats are reserved for working representatives of independent news organizations.

If available, additional press seating may be provided in the Gallery. Please do not place any items on the Gallery rail. Bloggers are invited to sit in the Gallery.

The use of cellular telephones and audible electronic devices is prohibited in the House Chamber.

The Sergeant-at-Arms and Doorkeepers may limit news media access to the floor and Gallery due to crowded conditions.

**DO NOT DISTURB THE DECORUM OF THE CHAMBER.**

The interior aisles are strictly off-limits, except to lawmakers and staff during the daily session. Press may only interview a Delegate in the designated press seating area (see area 5 of the House Chamber diagram).

Do not disturb members at their seats.

Floor privileges are not allowed while the House is at ease.

Do not block the view of the members, Clerk's staff, or Pages, or block their access to walkways throughout the Chamber.

## **HOUSE CHAMBER COVERAGE (cont.)**

Do not use lights, flashes, or tripods. (Tripods are allowed in designated areas of the Gallery--please see the Gallery Doorkeeper for locations.)

During the session, photographs may be taken on the Chamber floor in the “well” area. Photographers and cameramen are asked to kneel in the “well” area.

Do not walk in the “well” to get from one side of the Chamber to the other, but instead walk around the perimeter. Do not stop or talk to Delegates as you go from one side of the Chamber to the other.

Primary television camera coverage of the floor debate should be from the Gallery.

All television cameras in the Gallery must be secured on tripods.

Audio “mult” boxes are located in the Gallery.

Hand-held television cameras are allowed in the “well” on the Chamber floor, but must not block the view of members and staff.

The House has contracted with WCVE Public Broadcasting to provide television coverage of the floor sessions. Limited audio and video drops are available in the Capitol and General Assembly Building press rooms.

See Addendum for House Chamber Diagram, page 15.

If you have any questions, please see the Sergeant-at-Arms or call the House Clerk’s Office at 804-698-1619.

## **JOINT SESSION COVERAGE**

Joint Session coverage for the Governor's State of the Commonwealth Address is the one exception to normal media guidelines. Traditionally, a limited number of newspaper, television crews, and photographers have been allowed to cover the Joint Session from the rear of the House Chamber under the following conditions:

Television cameras are restricted to a designated area.

Photographs may be taken from the press seating area. Photographers may only set up tripods in the designated area. (Please note that a pool photographer is often used due to space limitations.) Television crews must keep cameras on tripods during the Joint Session. (A pool live feed camera is often used due to space limitations.)

The limited floor tripod space is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. It is requested that equipment be in place at least 45 minutes prior to the start of the Joint Session.

Do not conduct interviews in the Chamber until the Joint Assembly has adjourned.

Interviews are not allowed in the hallway outside of the Chamber while the Governor, the Senate, and guests are exiting the House Chamber.

The Governor's press office will advise the press corps of an interview location for the question and answer session with the Governor.

Please note, after the Governor's address concludes, the Governor and his party will exit the Chamber. The Joint Session will then adjourn and the Senate will exit the Chamber. The House remains in session for a brief time and then adjourns for the day.

## **SENATE AND HOUSE HALLWAY INTERVIEWS**

On the second floor of the Capitol:

Due to traffic congestion, interviews are not permitted outside the Senate and House Chambers during the daily sessions.

Provided no tours are being conducted, interviews are permitted in the Rotunda and the hallway outside the Old Senate Chamber and the Jefferson Room.

Television interviews should be conducted with the cameras and lights facing away from the entrance of the chambers.

Interviews are permitted on the first floor of the Capitol, provided they do not obstruct the normal flow of traffic in the hallways.

## **INTERIM CHAMBER ACCESS**

During the Interim, press personnel desiring to film or take still photos of the Senate Chamber or the House of Delegates Chamber must request access from the respective Clerks' Offices.

## **PAGE INTERVIEWS**

Interviews of Pages must be arranged in advance of the interview by contacting the Senate or House Clerks' Offices.

## SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEE ROOM COVERAGE

Due to space constraints, only accredited photographers (television/video and/or still) may set up in designated areas and only if the committee room is open. Live-feed and archived video of Senate and House Committees is available online. Senate committee rooms are opened 30 minutes prior to a meeting.

Do not conduct interviews with members in the committee rooms during meetings.

Do not block the aisles or block a member's view of the podium.

“Mult” boxes are located in: General Assembly Building Senate Rooms 300, 305, 306, 311, 400, 500, 600A, 600B, the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee Room and House Rooms A, B, C, North and South Subcommittee Rooms, and the House Appropriations Committee Room.

The Senate Briefing Room is located on the 4th Floor, Room 400, General Assembly Building.

The House Briefing Room is the primary venue for press conferences for the House (Second Floor, General Assembly Building).

Photographers (or their equipment) may not block the access of the legislative staff to members or the members' view of the Senator who has the floor.

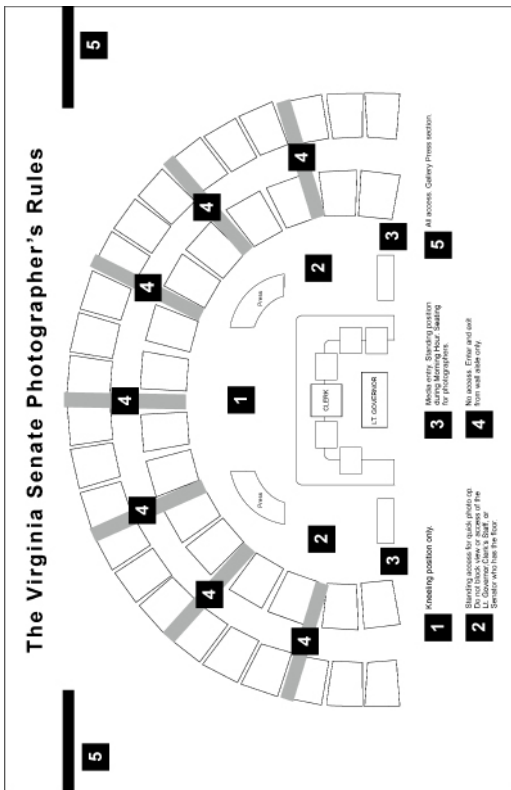
**SENATE COMMITTEE AND  
CONFERENCE ROOMS**

ROOM	LOCATION
Senate Room A	305, Third Floor, General Assembly Building
Senate Room B	306, Third Floor, General Assembly Building
Senate Room C	311, Third Floor, General Assembly Building
Senate Room 1	First Floor, West Hall, Capitol
Senate Room 2	First Floor, North Hall, Capitol
Senate Room 3	Extension, Capitol
Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee Room	Thirteenth Floor, General Assembly Building
Senate Subcommittee Rooms (General Assembly Building)	300 500 600 A (South) 600 B (North)
Senate Briefing Room	400, Fourth Floor, General Assembly Building

**HOUSE COMMITTEE AND  
CONFERENCE ROOMS**

ROOM	LOCATION
House Room A	Lower Level, General Assembly Building
House Room B House Room C	Second Floor, General Assembly Building
House Subcommittee Rooms (General Assembly Building)	200 N. Subcommittee Room 210 S. Subcommittee Room 700 A 700 B 800 900 1000
House Appropriations Committee Room	Twelfth Floor, General Assembly Building
House Room 1	First Floor, East Wing, Capitol
House Room 2	First Floor, North Hall, Capitol
House Room 3	Extension, Capitol
House Briefing Room	Second Floor, General Assembly Building

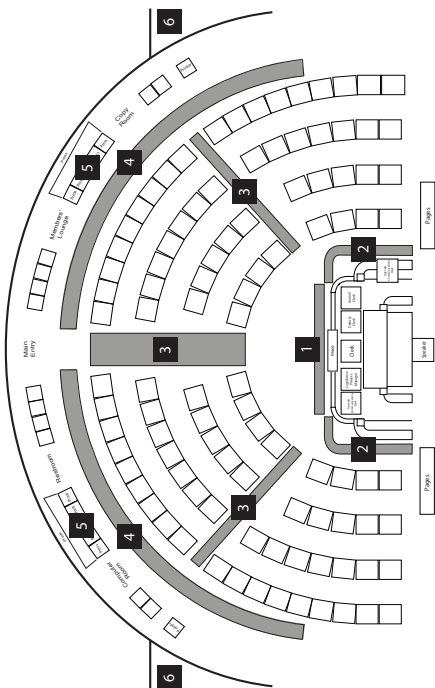
# SENATE CHAMBER DIAGRAM





# HOUSE CHAMBER DIAGRAM

## The Virginia House of Delegates Photographers' Rules



- 1** Kneeling positions only.
- 2** Standing access. Do not block view between Speaker, Clerk's staff and speaking Member. Move as directed by staff.
- 3** No Access. Enter and exit from wall aisle only.
- 4** Limited access. Quick still only photo ops.
- 5** All access. Press bench.
- 6** All access. Gallery Press area.

## INFORMATION CENTERS AND SERVICES

Bills, Daily Calendars, Committee Dockets, Votes, Cumulative Index, Bill Status and other information can be found at: <http://lis.virginia.gov>

Information Desk                      Atrium, General Assembly  
Building  
(804) 698-1470  
Staffed during session only

Senate Information                      First Floor, Capitol  
Room W147  
(804) 698-7410  
(888) 892-6948  
[information@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:information@senate.virginia.gov)

House Information and                      First Floor, Capitol  
Communications Services                      Room S131  
(804) 698-1500  
[HICS@house.virginia.gov](mailto:HICS@house.virginia.gov)