

## About the Courtroom:

- All parties must enter through a metal detector at the front entrance of the Courthouse.
- The Victim/Witness Advocate will check you in in the courtroom and organize you for your appearance. See map on other side for where to find the victim/witness advocate or prosecution table.
- 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.
- Do not chew gum. Dress neatly and professionally, avoid wearing leggings, sweatpants, sandals, or clothes that are ripped.

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## PORTSMOUTH DISTRICT COURT VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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*Ryan Grogan*  
*Victim/Witness Advocate*  
*603-610-7464*

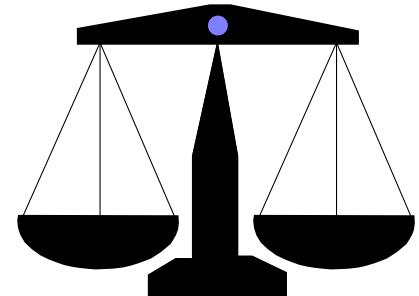
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# TIPS ON TESTIFYING

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*Helping Victims/Witnesses  
During the Trial Process*



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## **WITNESS GUIDELINES FOR TESTIFYING**

- Trials in District Court are Bench Trials only, meaning that the Judge decides guilt not a jury.
- When the case begins, and you hear your name called by the Prosecutor, walk directly up to the witness stand and stay standing until you are sworn in and the judge tells you to sit.
- The Prosecutor will ask you questions first followed by questions from the defense (attorney or defendant if they are representing themselves). The Prosecutor will then have a chance to redirect any questions if they wish. Once all questions are asked, the judge will release you as a witness. You may stay and watch, or you are free to go.
- Don't guess at answers. Give facts, not opinions. If you don't remember the answer, it's okay to say, "I don't remember". If you don't remember an answer but you know that it is in a written statement, you completed on scene tell the attorney and they will let you review your statement.
- Do not say, "I don't remember" when you do know an answer, in order to try to protect yourself from questioning.
- Tell the truth. Answer the questions to the best of your memory.
- Speak loud and clear. You must give verbal answers, so do not nod your head.
- If your 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 side, stop your answer immediately and wait until the judge directs you further.
- Take your time. Think before you speak. If you do not understand the question, ask to have it repeated or rephrased.
- Make sure to always stay as calm as possible. Defense attorneys may try to make you angry and the worst thing you can do is react.
- 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 are allowed to correct or disagree with the attorney asking questions.
- Do not exaggerate.
- Listen carefully to the questions asked and only answer what is asked.
- If you make a mistake when answering, it is okay to correct yourself.
- Be serious when testifying. The judge may misunderstand laughing and joking.
- The defendant will be seated at the defense table in the courtroom while you testify. The defendant is not allowed to speak to you, however if they do not have an attorney, they may ask you questions.
- It is normal to feel nervous. Try to relax as much as possible.

**Court Room Diagram**

