

BASIC RULES FOR GIVING TESTIMONY

1. Always tell the truth.
2. Listen carefully to the question. Make certain you understand the question asked.
3. If you forget the question, ask the attorney to repeat it.
4. Give a thoughtful, considered answer to the question.
5. Take your time.
6. Answer only the question asked. Do not volunteer information. Do not give conclusions and opinions unless asked.
7. Explain your answer if necessary. If a question cannot be truthfully answered with a “yes” or a “no” you have a right to explain the answer. If your answer was not clear or correctly stated, correct it immediately.
8. Be confident and firm in your answer.
9. Answer orally, distinctly and loud enough for all to hear.
10. Avoid the use of the words “never” and “always.”
11. Do not guess.
12. Be respectful.
13. Do not exaggerate.
14. Do not argue with the opposing counsel or judge.
15. Do not lose your temper.
16. Dress appropriately.
17. Be careful of your body language.
18. It is okay for witnesses or your attorney to have spoken to you.
19. Do not begin to respond to the question until the opposing attorney has completed the question and is silent.
20. Stop talking when the judge interrupts you or when an attorney objects to a question.
21. Avoid distracting mannerisms.
22. While taking the oath, sit upright, pay attention and say “I do” clearly.
23. Do not try to memorize what you are going to say, but do try to go over the matters upon which you will be examined in your mind prior to the trial.

24. Be serious in the courtroom.
25. Always be courteous even if the lawyer questioning is discourteous.
26. Do not take notes to the witness stand without permission from your attorney.