

## **THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN COMING TO COURT:**

### **1. Prepare.**

Refresh your memory so you can avoid confusion. Before testifying, picture the scene, the objects and people there and what occurred. If you have a written statement or deposition, review that as well.

### **2. Dress appropriately, act courteously.**

Court rules specify that witnesses shall be properly attired. Please do not wear jeans, shorts, “work out clothes”, short skirts, low-cut or “tight” clothing. If you are not used to or are uncomfortable wearing a suit or dress, don’t. This will only distract you during your testimony. Slacks and a nice shirt are a good choice. Dress comfortably, but conservatively.

### **3. Control your temper.**

Losing your temper reduces your credibility as a witness. Remember to stay calm, even if the attorney seems rude or makes you angry. Do not take things personally. The defense attorney is trying to represent their client as best as he/she can. If the defense sees that he/she can get to you, he/she will continue to do so.

### **4. Be attentive.**

If you appear bored or indifferent, the judge or jury may disregard your testimony. Do your best to stay alert. Remember that your attentiveness and cooperation will help keep things moving.

### **5. Speak clearly and loudly.**

Everyone in the courtroom must be able to hear distinctly what you have to say. Any mumbling or speaking softly detracts from your testimony and may give the impression that you are not certain of what you are saying. Don’t be afraid to speak up—you are not the one on trial. Remember to answer in words instead of nodding or saying “uh-huh” and “un-huh”. The court reporter writes down everything you say and if you answer without using “words”, the attorneys will ask you if that is a “yes” or “no”.

### **6. Be honest.**

Don’t exaggerate or try to slant your testimony. Justice will be served only if your testimony is as accurate as possible. Tell the truth.

### **7. Be helpful and professional.**

A trial is a serious and important matter. The court wants the facts, not comedy or attitude. Conduct yourself in a professional manner.

### **8. Answer all questions directly.**

Follow this simple guide:

- A. Listen carefully to the question. Take time and think about your answer.
- B. If there is an objection, wait until the court rules before answering. The judge will tell you if it is okay to answer the question.
- C. Answer the question asked—then stop.
- D. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. Don’t guess!
- E. Don’t try to answer a question that you do not understand. Ask that it be explained.
- F. Do not argue with the defense attorney.
- G. Look at the Jury whenever possible.
- H. Tell the truth.