

DIGITAL AUDIO RECORDING FAQs

1. What is digital court reporting?

Digital reporting records a court proceeding using high-quality digital recording equipment and keeps a running log of the speaker and key words throughout the proceeding. The recorded proceeding is crystal clear. The courtroom technology selected is [ForTheRecord®](#).

2. What format is this digital audio file saved in?

The audio is converted to a proprietary wave file format (.tfr). However, a request can be made to obtain an audio recording of a court proceedings. Audio recordings are created and saved in a proprietary file format by [ForTheRecord®](#), and **MUST** be played using the (FREE) FTR Player that is included with the audio recording.

3. What are my available options for receiving an audio recording?

Two separate options are available for receiving an audio recording. The clerk's office can send you an email containing an electronic link where the audio file can be downloaded, **OR** the audio file can be copied to a USB memory stick (for pickup at the clerk's office or mailed). If mail is requested, requestor must provide the Clerk's Office with a self-addressed, stamped (padded) envelope.

4. How do I order a digital audio recording? What is the fee and when must it be paid?

Complete the local form [Request for Audio Recording of Court Proceeding for Individuals Without CM/ECF Electronic Filing Access](#). This form is posted on the court web page under the local forms tab or available at the clerk's office. CM/ECF registered users must request and pay for audio recordings directly in CM/ECF. The fee for an audio recording is \$34.00. Audio recordings will be completed within two business days following receipt of payment. The Clerk's office will contact you when the audio recording is available. A separate request form must be completed for each hearing requested. Requests for audio recordings will not be accepted in the courtroom or by telephone.

5. What is the sound quality of an audio recording? What happens if everyone speaks at once?

Sound quality for digital audio recordings is typically much better than from a taped recording. Various microphones in the courtroom are used to record. The court has provided guidelines to follow when appearing in a digital court. These guidelines are available on our website and include audio recording etiquette. One very important guideline is to be mindful that only one person should be speaking at one time. Everyone present in the courtroom will be reminded of the guidelines by court personnel and signs that are posted.

6. How do I order a transcript? What is the fee?

Detailed information on ordering a transcript and the fees, is available on the court's website at: www.flsc.uscourts.gov. Complete the local form [Transcript Request Form](#). This form is posted on the court web page under the local forms tab, also available at the clerk's office in paper form. The completed form must be transmitted directly to the transcriber by email or U.S. postal mail - the clerk's office will not process transcript requests. A separate transcript request form must be completed for each hearing requested. The

transcription service will notify you of available services and costs. **Please note** that audio recordings provided may be purchased for **personal use only and are not the official record**. The official record of court proceedings can only be obtained in the form of a transcript through a court-approved Transcript Provider from materials provided to that transcriber by the court. **No party may obtain a transcript from an audio recording, have it transcribed and filed with the court.**

7. How does digital court reporting change practice in the courtroom?

Courtroom functions and decorum remain the same although everything is being digitally recorded. For courtrooms equipped with Digital Audio Recording (DAR) equipment, all counsel and other parties shall comply with the court's [Guidelines for Courtroom Decorum](#). Signs are posted in courtrooms to remind everyone that all sounds and conversations are being recorded.

8. Will digital audio recordings be available on case dockets?

Nor yet. We are aware of enhancements to CM/ECF that allow for posting of digital audio recordings available on case dockets via Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) for a fee. We are currently exploring adding this feature to our court docket and anticipate that it will be available sometime in the future.

9. What if I want to say something “off-the-record?”

The decision to proceed with a matter off the record is made by the judge. If you are making a request for a conversation to be held “off-the-record,” you must first get an affirmative ruling from the judge. The courtroom clerk will be advised that the conversation will be “off- the-record” and will cease recording.

To proceed with a sealed matter, it must be approved by court order, either by actual document or verbally. Courtroom clerks are alerted to this decision and will proceed accordingly. The sealed matter will still be recorded as part of the official court record; however, it will not be available for audio recording purchase or for inclusion in an ordered transcript.