

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, and a CD of the proceeding can be created. 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. However, a request can be made for an audio CD of court proceedings. Depending on the length of the hearing, the audio files contained on the CD may be in one of two file formats: either the proprietary file format or MP3. If the audio files are in the proprietary file format, they must be played using the program FTR Player, which will be included on the CD. If the files are in MP3 format, the CD will play on standard pc media players and on most CD-R and CD- RW compatible players. This format is compatible with Apple or Mac computers and can be played in a vehicle or on a personal CD player.

3. Can I request the audio recording to be sent via email instead of a CD?

No. One hour of audio recording creates a 27 MB audio file. It takes multiple CDs to capture a full hearing day. This makes it impractical for the court to send audio recordings to the requester via email. Many email applications will not accept files that large and they cannot be broken down to smaller audio bytes. A CD will hold up to 700 MB of data, about 70 minutes of audio. Using CDs as the medium to fulfill audio recording requests is a more practical approach.

4. How do I order a digital audio recording? What is the fee?

Complete the local form [Request for Compact Disc \(CD\) of Audio Recording of Court Proceeding](#). 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 fee for an audio recording is \$34.00. The completed form must be submitted to the clerk's office for processing. CD's of audio recordings will be available within 48 hours upon receipt of the request. Clerk's office will contact you when the CD is ready for pickup, at which time the fee is due. If you request the CD to be mailed to you, you must provide the clerk's office with a padded, self-addressed stamped envelope along with the required fee. 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 on CDs 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 a CD and file it 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 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?

No. 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. This functionality will not be offered in this court at this time.

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 CD purchase or for inclusion in an ordered transcript.