

2021 NATIONAL MOCK TRIAL TIMEKEEPING GUIDE



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TIMEKEEPING RULES

While all mock trial team members should review all mock trial rules and handbooks, there are several rules in the Rules of Competition handbook that apply to timekeeping and must be reviewed carefully by timekeepers, including:

- Rule 1.3B
- Rule 3.2
- Rule 4.12
- Rule 1.4
- Rule 4.6
- Rule 4.24

TIMEKEEPING SUPPLIES

- **Two timekeeping devices:** It's suggested that each timekeeper use one timekeeping device for the Plaintiff/Prosecution and one for the Defense, regardless of what side the timekeeper's team is presenting in the case. Timekeepers can use stopwatches or phones for keeping time, but if using phones, the phones must be placed in silent and airplane mode.
- **Pens or Pencils:** Each timekeeper will use a pen or pencil to fill out their timesheets and should have an extra available as a back-up.

The following items are housed on the

- **Time Remaining Cards:** All teams must use the same Time Remaining Cards during competition and time intervals may not be altered in any way.
- **Time Card Use Table:** The Time Card Use Table tells timekeepers which Time Remaining Card to hold up at defined intervals for each part of the trial.
- **Timekeeping Sheets:** The timekeeping sheets are for timekeeper use only and do not have to be turned into competition staff at the end of a round of competition.

TIMEKEEPING DUTIES

Each team is responsible for training at least one team member to serve as the team's official timekeeper. The timekeeper from the Plaintiff/Prosecution side and the timekeeper from the Defense side will work together as a neutral timekeeping team, timing both sides and ensuring accurate and fair time has been kept for both teams.

Timekeepers are responsible for being proficient with the information in the Rules of Competition and this Timekeeping Guide. The team's timekeeper(s) must be familiar with the trial sequence chart and have practiced filling out the Timekeeping Sheet before the competition begins.

BEFORE THE TRIAL

1. Include the name of the timekeeper(s) on the team's Roster.
2. Gather timekeeping materials as outlined in the Timekeeping Supplies section.

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TIP: Label your timing devices with a “P” for the Plaintiff/Prosecution and a “D” for the Defense. Keep the “P” device in your left hand and the “D” device in your right hand.

3. Enter the courtroom number, date, and team codes in the space provided on the top portion of the Timekeeping Sheet. Circle the round number.

DURING THE TRIAL

Timekeepers work together as a neutral timekeeping team to ensure that time is kept accurately and fairly for both sides during the trial. Timekeepers may write the time remaining in the Zoom chat or turn on their camera and show the Time Remaining Cards on camera. When time has run out for a segment of a trial, the timekeepers need to make sure they write or hold up the STOP card to notify teams and judges that the segment has ended.

1. RESET a timing device to zero ONLY at the following times:
 - At the beginning of each side’s opening statement;
 - At the beginning of each side’s direct examination;
 - At the beginning of each side’s cross examination; and,
 - At the beginning of each side’s closing argument
2. DO NOT reset the timing devices to zero at the following times:
 - At the end of direct and cross examinations (you will need to resume direct examination timing for redirect questioning, and cross examination time for re-cross questioning);
 - At the end of a Plaintiff/Prosecution’s closing argument (you will need to resume the Plaintiff’s closing argument timing for the Plaintiff /Prosecution’s rebuttal).
3. START timing only when each attorney starts to speak (i.e. when the attorney actually speaks the first word of his or her opening, closing, or examination question).
4. STOP timing during objections, responses to objections, questioning by the judge, and when the attorney says his or her last word on completion of a given task.
5. Remember: DO NOT COUNT TIME
 - When an attorney responds to a presiding judge’s inquiry as to whether or not the side is ready to proceed, asks for permission to reserve time for a rebuttal, asks for permission to use/move a podium;
 - From the time the witness is called until he or she takes the witness stand;
 - From the time an objection is raised until after the ruling by the presiding judge and the examining attorney says the first word to continue the examination;
 - During the time a judge may raise questions to a team or the judging panel; or
 - During a technical emergency during a virtual competition.
6. Time DOES NOT STOP for the introduction of exhibits or other evidence.

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7. At the end of each segment of the trial, each timekeeper should record the cumulative time used on the Timekeeping Sheet.
8. At the end of each segment of the trial, timekeepers should check through private message in the Zoom chat, to make sure both sides timing devices for that segment are within 15 seconds of each other. If the timing devices show a discrepancy of more than 15 seconds, follow the procedures outlined in the Timekeeping Discrepancies section of this guide.

AFTER THE TRIAL

The timekeepers will reset their timing devices to zero in preparation to time the debriefing. If possible, timekeepers should remind the judges that they will be timing the debrief. The timekeepers will begin the countdown from 10 minutes when the judges begin talking. Signal the judges following the Time Card Use Table from the 5-minute mark. When 10 minutes have passed, the timekeepers will hold up the STOP card and/or write STOP in Zoom chat to politely signal to the judges that the debrief session has ended.

TIMEKEEPING DISCREPANCIES

At the end of each segment of the trial (i.e., at the end of each opening statement, at the end of each direct examination or cross examination of a witness, and at the end of each closing argument), if there is a timing discrepancy of more than 15 seconds between the Plaintiff/Prosecution and Defense timekeepers, the following rules will apply.

- Any timing discrepancies between timekeepers of 15 seconds or less WILL NOT be considered a timing discrepancy.
- If a timing discrepancy more than 15 seconds has occurred, timekeepers are to notify the Presiding Judge that a timing discrepancy has occurred.
- Timekeepers may raise timing discrepancies ONLY at the end of each phase of the trial presentation as outlined above.
- The Presiding Judge will rule on any timing discrepancy before the trial continues. Timekeepers will synchronize timing devices to match the Presiding Judge's ruling. For example if Plaintiff/Prosecution timing device indicates 2 minutes left for Plaintiff/Prosecution's case and the Defense timing device indicates time is expired, the Presiding Judge might decide to split the difference in the timing variation and give Plaintiff/Prosecution 1 minute to conclude. Defense would adjust timing to allow for the 1-minute timing decision.
- No time disputes will be entertained after the trial concludes.
- The decision of the Presiding Judge regarding the resolution of timing disputes is final.