

Appendix 1H – Rules of Coverage

The Rules of Coverage are designed to enable televised coverage to be comprehensive, balanced, fair and accurate so that the viewer will experience the proceedings as if present in the Visitors' Gallery in the Chamber.

Part I. Coverage of Proceedings

Ceann Comhairle

The precedence of the Chair under Standing Orders should always be adhered to by the camera director. Whenever the Chair speaks or rises, the camera should be focused on the Chair to the exclusion of all other members.

Permissible Shots

- (i) Wide-angle shots of the Chamber to facilitate editing by broadcasters.
- (ii) Reaction shots of the member(s) or party being referred to by the member in possession and where a party is the issue a panning shot of the Government and opposition front benches: however, there will be no relaxation in the general rule whereby in cases of disorder and unparliamentary behaviour the camera will be focused on the Chair until order has been restored.
- (iii) On significant occasions, frontal shots of the Government entering the Chamber at the commencement of the proceedings or in the course of a sitting day.
- (iv) Panning shots of the Chamber on major occasions.

Disorder

In cases of disorder and unparliamentary behaviour the camera should be focused on the Chair and should remain so until order has been restored.

Members

Shots of members, after he or she has been recognised by the Chair, and is addressing the House, should be sufficiently wide to include the immediate surrounding area and should be of waist, shoulders and head.

Witnesses before Committees

The Rules of Coverage as they apply to members shall apply similarly to witnesses; provided, however, that where a Committee or sub-committee thereof which has decided that to televise a witness appearing before it, whether or not pursuant to the Committees of the Houses of the Oireachtas (Compellability, Privileges and Immunities of Witnesses) Act, 1997, would prejudice the safety of such a witness, the relevant proceedings will be televised in such manner as to protect the visual and /or aural identity of the witness.

Displays by Members

Where a member uses a display during his/her contribution the shot should be sufficiently wide to prevent the display being legible or identifiable on television.

Parts of the Chamber

- (i) Shots of the press and public galleries, and the officials' gallery (the bull-pen) should not be shown.
- (ii) The distinguished visitors' gallery may be shown where the Chair is extending an official welcome to distinguished visitors.

Attendant Officials

Shots of Officers of the House (and other officials) advising the Chair and of Ushers in attendance in the Chamber should not normally be shown.

Official Documents

No close-up shots of official documents used by members or officers or officials of the House should be shown.

Order of Business

Wide shots of the Chamber are appropriate during the Order of Business.

Question Time

During Question Time only the member asking the question and the Minister or Minister of State replying should be shown; similarly, in the case of matters brought forward for discussion on the adjournment.

Divisions

During Divisions, a wide-angle shot of the Chamber may be used. During the taking of a Division the following may be shown:

- the putting of the Question, both initially and after the ten-minute interval;
- the announcement of the names of the Tellers; and
- the announcement by the Chair of the result.

Part II. Use of Materials by Broadcasters

Broadcasting on sound and vision of the proceedings of the Houses and its Committees by national, local and foreign broadcasters is authorised subject to the following conditions:

- (a) that recordings or extracts of the proceedings shall not be used in programmes of light entertainment, political satire, party political broadcasts or in any form of advertising or publicity, other than in the form of news and current affairs programme trailers;
- (b) that broadcasters shall ensure political balance in the material they use;
- (c) that, subject to the approval of the Joint Committee on Broadcasting and Parliamentary Information or a sub-Committee thereof, broadcasters may be permitted to carry live coverage of any item of business subject to the following provisos:
 - (i) that such item shall not be interrupted by commentary, analysis or commercial breaks, and
 - (ii) that such item may not be re-broadcast in whole or in part except as permitted under Part II of these Rules.
- (d) that, notwithstanding paragraph (c), transmission of live proceedings within news/current affairs programmes is permitted; and
- (e) that copyright of all audio and televised material is vested in the Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann and the Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann.