

GUIDELINES

Committee on Public Records

1. Free access to public records is of paramount importance if the public is to be fully informed, and the bench, bar and press have an equal interest in and responsibility to see that this access is maintained.
2. Except where confidentiality is specifically provided for in statutes, all records which must be maintained by law are clearly open to the public.
3. Every effort should be made to educate not only those among the bar, bench and press but other public officials as well as to the statutes, Supreme Court decisions, attorney general opinions and other authorities bearing on the subject of public records.
4. Any effort by an individual or group to suppress or conceal a public record should be resisted and exposed by the Bench, Bar and Press.
5. The subcommittee should work toward persuading all persons involved to transcribe public records as quickly as possible and make them available to the public.
6. In cases involving matters of public interest, it is entirely proper for the judge writing the opinion or decision to summarize his holding in a paragraph or two to aid the news media in properly interpreting the decision to the public. This is especially important in cases where the opinion is technical or involved.
7. Members of the Bench and Bar should make every effort to be available to answer questions by communications media representatives regarding public records, and representatives of the media should be sufficiently trained to properly interpret legal actions.
8. The committee urges that public records by arresting officers, whether state, county or city, be kept in numbered sequence.

March 26, 1966