

Stanislaus County Mock Trials Presiding Judge Guidelines

- 1. Time Schedule – 80 minutes allotted time per trial (includes 6 minutes for pretrial motion)**

The team clerk or bailiff keeps time on a timing sheet. Each team will have **40 minutes** to present its case, including the pretrial motion. **The clock will be stopped when witnesses are called to the stand, attorneys make objections, and presiding judges question attorneys and witnesses or offer their observations.** The clock will NOT be stopped if witnesses are asked to approach the diagram or for other physical demonstrations. Excessive objections by attorneys or comments by the presiding judge can cause the trial to exceed the 80-minute allotted trial time. PLEASE try to keep the trial moving so as not to enter into overtime.
- 2. Mock Trials Script**

Please adhere to the Mock Trial script at all times during the course of the trial (see Judges Handbook).
- 3. Presiding Judge and Adjudicator Comments**

Please do not announce your decision in the case until AFTER the adjudicators have scored the teams. Once scoring has been completed and you have rendered your decision, please allow 10 minutes for comments. This is a crucial period for teams to receive constructive feedback that will assist them in their next trial.
- 4. Courtroom Observer**

An adult volunteer from each team has been assigned to assist with organization and security of the courtroom and trial. Should questions arise during the course of the trial please ask the adult Courtroom Observer for assistance.
- 5. Comment Sheets**

Feedback for team performance is a crucial part of their Mock Trials learning experience. Presiding Judges and adjudicators are asked to take a moment to complete a comment sheet for each team.
- 6. Tiebreaker Form**

In case of a tie between competing teams the presiding judge decides which team won the trial. A Tiebreaker form will be provided for each trial. Complete Tiebreaker Form and give to Courtroom Observer at the end of the trial