

915.38 Televised, videotaped, and recorded evidence limited court testimony minors and others.

1. Upon its own motion or upon motion of any party, a court may protect a minor, as defined in section 599.1, from trauma caused by testifying in the physical presence of the defendant where it would impair the minor's ability to communicate, by ordering that the testimony of the minor be taken in a room other than the courtroom and be televised by closed-circuit equipment for viewing in the courtroom. However, such an order shall be entered only upon a specific finding by the court that such measures are necessary to protect the minor from trauma. Only the judge, prosecuting attorney, defendant's attorney, persons necessary to operate the equipment, and any person whose presence, in the opinion of the court, would contribute to the welfare and well-being of the minor may be present in the room with the minor during the minor's testimony. The judge shall inform the minor that the defendant will not be present in the room in which the minor will be testifying but that the defendant will be viewing the minor's testimony through closed-circuit television.

During the minor's testimony the defendant shall remain in the courtroom and shall be allowed to communicate with the defendant's counsel in the room where the minor is testifying by an appropriate electronic method.

In addition, upon a finding of necessity, the court may allow the testimony of a victim or witness with a mental illness, mental retardation, or other developmental disability to be taken as provided in this subsection, regardless of the age of the victim or witness.

2. The court may, upon its own motion or upon motion of a party, order that the testimony of a minor, as defined in section 599.1, be taken by recorded deposition for use at trial, pursuant to rule of criminal procedure 2.13(2)(b). In addition to requiring that such testimony be recorded by stenographic means, the court may on motion and hearing, and upon a finding that the minor is unavailable as provided in rule of evidence 5.804(a), order the videotaping of the minor's testimony for viewing in the courtroom by the court. The videotaping shall comply with the provisions of rule of criminal procedure 2.13(2)(b), and shall be admissible as evidence in the trial. In addition, upon a finding of necessity, the court may allow the testimony of a victim or witness with a mental illness, mental retardation, or other developmental disability to be taken as provided in this subsection, regardless of the age of the victim or witness.

3. The court may upon motion of a party admit into evidence the recorded statements of a child, as defined in section 702.5, describing sexual contact performed with or on the child, not otherwise admissible in evidence by statute or court rule if the court determines that the recorded statements substantially comport with the requirements for admission under rule of evidence 5.803(24) or 5.804(b)(5).

4. A court may, upon its own motion or upon the motion of a party, order the court testimony of a child to be limited in duration in accordance with the developmental maturity of the child. The court may consider or hear expert testimony in order to determine the appropriate limitation on the duration of a child's testimony. However, the court shall, upon motion, limit the duration of a child's uninterrupted testimony to one hour, at which time the court shall allow the child to rest before continuing to testify.