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**United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois  
JERS (Jury Evidence Recording System) Attorney Instructions**

**DATE PREPARED: May 20, 2014**

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## I. OVERVIEW

Jury Evidence Recording System (JERS) provides ready access to the evidence during deliberation through the use of a touch-screen kiosk, reducing the need to handle physical evidence while allowing the jury to view the evidence multiple times, rewind videos, and zoom in on pictures and documents.

JERS is available in courtrooms 1919, 2103, 2119, and 2541.

## II. BEFORE TRIAL

### A. All Cases

#### 1. Statement of JERS Use at Trial.

Unless otherwise ordered by the presiding judge, JERS will be used to present electronic evidence in any courtroom where the JERS equipment is available.

#### 2. Submission of Electronic Exhibits to the Court.

Electronic exhibits shall be exchanged between parties and provided to the court on a data storage device, such as a USB, DVD, or CD.

**Please note: While exhibit stickers are used for paper/physical exhibits, the electronic exhibits provided for use in JERS should not display the exhibit numbering stickers. The exhibit description replaces the use of exhibit stickers on the electronic version of exhibits only.**

#### Cumulative File Size of Exhibits too Large for One CD/DVD

If a party's electronic exhibits exceed the storage capacity of one CD/DVD, they must be stored on a USB drive of sufficient capacity.

#### 3. Correct Naming Convention for Electronic Exhibits.

##### a) Plaintiff(s)/Government

##### (1) General Format:

<exhibit number> - <exhibit part>\_<exhibit description>.<file extension>

**\*\*Note: All exhibits shall be described using neutral and non-adversarial terms. For any exhibit that is marked for identification, do not include "(ID)" in the exhibit number or description of the electronic copy submitted for use in JERS.**

(2) Maximum Number of Characters: The maximum number of characters that may be used in the <exhibit number> and the <exhibit part> field is **4** each. The maximum number of characters that may be used in the <exhibit description> field in **200**.

(3) **Specific Format:** The exhibit name(s) for plaintiff(s) begin with numerical characters. Examples:

- (a) *"1\_2010 Financial Statement.pdf"*
- (b) *"2-a\_Store Surveillance Footage.wmv"*
- (c) *"2-b\_Phone Call Recording.mp3"*
- (d) *"1111-aaaa\_Store Surveillance Footage 2.mpg"*

b) Defendant(s)

(1) General Format:

**<exhibit number> - <exhibit part>\_<exhibit description>.<file extension>**

***\*\*Note: All exhibits shall be described using neutral and non-adversarial terms. For any exhibit that is marked for identification, do not include "(ID)" in the exhibit number or description of the electronic copy submitted for use in JERS.***

(2) **Maximum Number of Characters:** The maximum number of characters that may be used in the **<exhibit number>** and the **<exhibit part>** field is **4** each. The maximum number of characters that may be used in the **<exhibit description>** field is **200**.

(3) **Specific Format:** The exhibit name(s) for defendant(s) begin with alpha characters. Examples:

- (a) *"A\_2010 Financial Statement.pdf"*
- (b) *"B-1\_Store Surveillance Footage.wmv"*
- (c) *"B-2\_Phone Call Recording.mp3"*
- (d) *"AAAA-1111\_Suspect Surveillance Footage 2.mpg"*

4. **Importing Submitted Exhibits into JERS.**

Upon receipt of the electronic exhibits, the courtroom deputy will import them into JERS in preparation for trial. The courtroom deputy will compare the electronic evidence with the exhibit list to ensure we have an electronic copy of all non-physical exhibits.

### III. TRIAL

For any unlisted exhibit introduced following direct examination of witnesses at trial, counsel should, whenever possible, have an electronic copy available for the courtroom deputy. The electronic copy of unlisted exhibits shall conform to the required naming conventions discussed above. Counsel is expected to work with the courtroom deputy to determine how best to capture newly introduced exhibits into JERS.

#### A. Load exhibit(s) into JERS during recess or before/after court.

##### Manual Upload of Exhibits Outside of Trial Proceedings.

Additional electronic evidence may be added manually by the courtroom deputy during breaks of court proceedings or before/after court. The exhibits should be on a CD/DVD or USB drive and named using the proper naming convention referenced above.

#### B. Review of Admitted Exhibits at the Conclusion of Each Trial Day.

Counsel are responsible to ensure that the electronic version of each exhibit available for viewing by jurors during deliberations is an exact replica of what was admitted in evidence. Prior to the start of any trial day, counsel shall provide the courtroom deputy with a list of exhibits entered the previous day. At the end of the trial and prior to the electronic exhibits being released for the jury through JERS, each attorney must sign an **Attorney Certification** verifying that the exhibits contained in JERS are exact replicas of what was admitted in evidence.

### IV. PRE-DELIBERATION

#### A. Select Exhibits to Release to Jury through JERS.

At the conclusion of trial, counsel will provide the courtroom deputy with a list of exhibits to release to the jury through JERS, and with a second list, where appropriate, of any paper and physical exhibits to be made available during deliberations.

Any disagreement between counsel regarding which exhibits to release to the jury or regarding any requested restriction of exhibits will be resolved by the presiding judge.

#### B. Paper and Physical Exhibits.

Unless otherwise ordered by the presiding judge, jurors will also have access during their deliberations to all paper and physical exhibits.

#### D. Exhibit Report.

The courtroom deputy will provide counsel with a final list of exhibits (exhibit report) with a notation as to whether or not the exhibit was released to the jury.

## **V. DELIBERATION**

### **A. Jurors' Access to Electronic Evidence During Deliberations.**

The JERS system has a touchscreen monitor, which the jury will use to view a tutorial about how to use JERS as well as to navigate through and view electronic exhibits. Jurors are not able to access any television programming or the internet through the JERS system.

### **B. Juror Questions Relating to JERS Exhibits.**

Juror questions regarding any and all exhibits (JERS/paper/physical) shall be made in writing and presented to the court for resolution.

### **C. Technical Failure of JERS system.**

No court personnel are allowed to enter the jury room once deliberations have commenced without prior court permission. Any request by jurors for technical assistance shall be made in writing and presented to the court for its consideration before any court staff will assist the jurors. In the event court staff must enter the deliberation room to address a technical problem, the jurors will be escorted to another room to wait while court staff resolves the issue.

## **VI. POST-TRIAL**

### **A. Data Storage Devices.**

Upon counsel's request, the courtroom deputy will return any USBs, DVDs, or CDs containing electronic exhibits to the submitting party.



## Jury Evidence Recording System (JERS) Exhibit Naming Conventions

**Plaintiff(s)/Government:** (Exhibit name(s) begin with numerical characters)

General Format: <exhibit number> - <exhibit part>\_<exhibit description>.<file extension> Examples:

- Documents: "1\_2009 Financial Statement.pdf" "2\_2010 Financial Statement.pdf"
- Pictures: "3\_Picture of Suspect.jpg" "3-a\_Picture Suspect Close Up.gif"
- Audio: "4\_Phone Conversation 1.mp3" "4-a\_Phone Conversation 2.wav"
- Video: "4-b\_Suspect in Store.wmv" "4-c\_Suspect carrying TV.mpg"

**Defendant(s):** (Exhibit name(s) begin with alpha characters)

General Format: <exhibit number> - <exhibit part>\_<exhibit description>.<file extension> Examples:

- Documents: "A\_2009 Financial Statement.pdf" "B\_2010 Financial Statement.pdf"
- Pictures: "C\_Picture of Suspect.jpg" "C-1\_Picture Suspect Close Up.gif"
- Audio: "D\_Phone Conversation 1.mp3" "D-1\_Phone Conversation 2.wav"
- Video: "D-2\_Suspect in Store.wmv" "D-3\_Suspect carrying TV.mpg"

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- **All exhibits shall be described using neutral and non-adversarial terms. The exhibit description field is limited to 200 characters.**
- **For any exhibit that is marked for identification, do not include "(ID)" in the exhibit number or description of the JERS copy.**
- **While exhibit stickers are used for paper/physical exhibits, the electronic exhibits provided for use in JERS should not display the exhibit numbering stickers. The exhibit description given to the electronic version replaces the use of exhibit stickers.**