

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF FAUQUIER COUNTY

**IN RE: ALL PERSONS AND ITEMS ENTERING THE
COURTHOUSE**

ORDER

BY THE AUTHORITY in Virginia Code § 8.01-4, as amended, this Court adopts the following rules and procedures to promote proper order and decorum and the efficient and safe use of the Courthouse facilities, as well as all offices, agencies, departments and all public areas of the Courthouse and court complex, it is therefore **ORDERED** as follows:

The "*Courthouse*," as referenced herein, shall constitute the entirety of the structure situated adjacent to W. Lee Street, Culpeper Street and Ashby Street and typically addressed as 29 Ashby Street, Warrenton, Virginia 20186.

The "*court complex*" as referenced herein, shall constitute the Courthouse as well as the grounds immediately surrounding the Courthouse to include walkways, sidewalks, greens, patios and the parking lot located adjacent to the Courthouse on Ashby Street. The court complex shall extend from the Courthouse to the three public roadways (W. Lee Street, Culpeper Street and Ashby Street) and from the Courthouse to the Warren Green building

1. Prohibited Items and Substances

No illegal substances, explosive devices or materials, defensive or offensive weapons, including but not limited to those items listed in the 1950 Code of Virginia § 18.2-283.1 and § 18.2-308, as amended, or any item deemed by court security to be potentially dangerous, shall be brought into the Courthouse. Any such item or substance is subject to seizure and forfeiture. Notwithstanding the above, court security officers and properly credentialed sworn law enforcement

officers may carry their officially issued weapons and associated equipment, if entering the Courthouse while in the performance of their duties. Law enforcement officers not in uniform must have their credentials and badge of authority displayed and readily visible while in the Courthouse. The Fauquier County Sheriffs Office shall ensure that proper notice and signage of prohibited items and substances is displayed at the entrances to the Courthouse.

2. **Search and Seizure/Forfeiture**

Upon entering the Courthouse, all persons except court security officers and on-duty and properly-credentialed sworn law enforcement officers, shall submit to an electronic search, physical "pat down," or both, of his or her person at the request of any court security officer. All persons shall also exhibit to such officers the contents of any parcel, handbag, shoulder bag, carrying case or container of whatever nature, and such items shall be subject to an electronic and/or physical search at the request of any court security officer. All objects not permitted in the Courthouse are subject to seizure and forfeiture. The Chief Judge of the Circuit Court in coordination with the Fauquier County Sheriffs Office may exempt specific staff entering the Courthouse outside of normal operating hours from the requirements of this paragraph. The Fauquier County Sheriffs Office shall maintain a list of exempted personnel and any restrictions on their hours of access.

3. **Courthouse Entrances**

There are four access points to the Courthouse which shall be designated and secured as follows:

- a. **Hotel Street:** Entering the Courthouse by the Hotel Street side of the building is not permitted. The Fauquier County Sheriffs Office shall ensure that this access point is secure, designated from the interior of the Courthouse as "Emergency Exit Only," and alarmed accordingly.
- b. **W. Lee Street:** Entering the Courthouse by the W. Lee Street side of the building is not permitted. The Fauquier County Sheriffs Office shall ensure

that this access point is secure, designated from the interior of the Courthouse as "Emergency Exit Only," and alarmed accordingly.

- c. Ashby Street: The Courthouse entrance on Ashby Street is designated for general public access and shall also serve as access for properly-credentialed employees and staff working in the Courthouse and properly-credentialed law enforcement officers and probation officers. The Ashby Street entrance is a designated access for any qualified person pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- d. Culpeper Street: The Courthouse entrance on Culpeper Street is designated for general public access while court is in session.

4. **Tobacco and Smoke Free Building**

Smoking, the use of tobacco or tobacco products, the use of e-cigarettes and the use of vaping products are prohibited in all areas of the Courthouse.

5. **Animals**

No animals, except bona fide service animals (an "emotional support" animal is not a bona fide service animal) and canine dogs accompanied by their assigned law enforcement officer/handler, shall be permitted into the Courthouse.

6. **Photography, Cameras, Audio or Video Recordings**

Unless specifically authorized by a Judge, no photographs, audio recordings, video recordings or any electronic transmissions of voice or images shall be made in the courtrooms, witness rooms, jury rooms, or in any of the public areas of the Courthouse. Law enforcement officers in the performance of their duties may photograph, audio or video record in any area of the court complex, except for the courtroom. The playing of audio transmissions or the use of headphones, earbuds or other similar devices shall be prohibited in the public areas of the courthouse and in the courtrooms. Court reporters shall be permitted to bring audio recording equipment into the Courthouse and use these devices when serving as a court reporter on assigned cases.

7. **Portable Electronic Devices; Use in the Courthouse; Violations**

- a. “Portable electronic devices” means (i) a personal laptop; (ii) a tablet; (iii) a mobile telephone, including a cell phone and any telephone with a camera, audio and video recording capabilities, and transmission capabilities; (iv) an electronic calendar; (v) an electronic book reader; (vi) a smart watch; or (vii) any other electronic personal communication device. “Portable electronic device” does not include a camera, a video camera, video or audio recording equipment, or a recording device that is not otherwise a component of a portable electronic device.
- b. Portable electronic devices may be brought into the courthouse following an inspection, electronic or otherwise, by a court security officer. Only devices that are the property of the individuals authorized under this Order (or their employer when such device is assigned to their use by their employer) may be brought into the courthouse by such individuals. An authorized individual may not bring devices of others into the courthouse. Portable electronic devices may be used only by individuals authorized in this paragraph to possess such items in the public areas of the courthouse (i.e., not in a courtroom or in a conference room adjacent to a courtroom), or in an employee’s assigned private work area, and should be used discreetly in order to respect the rights of others. Upon entering the *courthouse* all devices must be placed on silent or vibrate mode and not used for any purpose except as provided in paragraph 9(d) or unless authorized by a presiding judge.
- c. Any portable electronic device used in violation of this Order may be confiscated by court security and the court or sheriff’s department responsible for providing court security shall not be liable for any damage to or loss of such confiscated portable electronic device.
- d. Mobile telephones (e.g., cell phones) may be used to make and receive calls **only** in the following areas of the courthouse:

- (i) In an office located within the courthouse by individuals working or authorized to work in that office.
- (ii) Outside the courthouse entrances, including the stairs and porticos of the courthouse.

Use of mobile telephones to make and receive calls in any other areas of the courthouse is a violation of this Order (see Par. 9(c)). In consideration for others working in and using the courthouse, persons making or receiving calls must not speak in a loud voice and must not use profanity, vulgar, insulting or offensive language.

8. **Portable Electronic Devices in the Courtroom.**

- a. **Requirements before entering a courtroom and permitted uses.** All portable electronic devices shall be silenced (i.e., no audio or vibration setting) prior to entering the courtroom. These devices shall be silenced in such a manner that no calls, messages, alerts, or audible sound is capable of being emitted. Sworn court reporters designated to a case may record the proceedings to create an accurate record of the proceedings. *Unless specifically authorized by a presiding judge, no device may be used in a courtroom or in a conference room adjacent to a courtroom.*
- b. **Permitted uses when a case is called for a hearing.** Once a specific case is called for a hearing, and with permission of the presiding judge, the attorneys appearing in that case (and their support staff if authorized by the presiding judge for the specific case) shall be allowed to use their portable electronic devices solely for access to legal research, their professional calendars, for scheduling, as calculators, and for access to case related files while the case is before the court for hearing. Such devices shall be silenced in such a manner that no calls, messages, alerts, or audible sound is capable of being emitted.
- c. **Use of evidence from a portable electronic device.** Any person needing to use a portable electronic device to present evidence in a case must

notify and receive permission of the presiding judge at the commencement of the case, or prior thereto, to allow the presiding judge an opportunity to have court security monitor the use of the portable electronic device to ensure that the device is used strictly for the evidentiary purposes allowed and that no disallowed applications (e.g., video recording applications) have been activated. Nothing herein shall be construed to permit any courthouse personnel to search or access any data on the portable electronic device of a visitor to the court, including during a security screening.

9. **Courtroom Decorum**

Proper attire (determined in the discretion of the presiding judge) shall be worn in the courtroom. Hats and sunglasses shall be removed prior to entering the courtroom. "Hats" do not include headwear worn for medical, religious or cultural purposes. After entering the courtroom, all persons should remain seated while court is in session. Silence is required while court is in session. The reading of newspapers, magazines or other printed material by individuals in the public seating area of the courtroom is prohibited. Any behavior that tends to distract the litigants or the Court may be cause for dismissal from the courtroom. No food, beverages or gum chewing shall be permitted in the courtroom. Attorneys and parties to a case may have water in a plastic bottle, or other another container deemed acceptable by court security, at counsel table during a hearing. No food or beverages must not be consumed in the courtroom unless expressly authorized by a presiding judge.

10. **Failure to Comply**

Failure to comply with the provisions of this Order may result in the loss of privileges, seizure and forfeiture of electronic devices and/or contempt.

11. **Copies to be Posted**

Copies of this Order shall be posted at the entrances of the Courthouse, outside the entrances to the Courtrooms, in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office, and on the circuit court's Virginia Judicial System website.

12. **Prior Orders**

This Order supersedes any prior Orders of this Court with respect to such matters. Should this Order conflict with any Local Rules previously adopted by this Court, this Order shall control.

13. **Effective Date**

This Order is effective July 1, 2026.

ENTERED this 29TH day of June, 2026.


CHIEF CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE