

VIRGINIA

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF ALLEGHANY COUNTY

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BATH COUNTY

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF HIGHLAND COUNTY

STANDING ORDER

REGARDING RULES GOVERNING COURTHOUSES

The presiding judge of the above Courts finds that the rules set forth below are necessary to properly maintain security, the efficient and safe use, order and decorum in all Courtrooms, Courthouse facilities and environs within and about the Courthouses of the Courts listed above (collectively referred to as the "Court Buildings"). Accordingly, with the concurrence of the Judges of the General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts, and pursuant to the authority conferred by §8.01-4, 16.1-69.35:4 and 17.1-128.2 of the Code of Virginia, it is **ORDERED** as follows:

1. Security screening

Before being admitted, all persons (hereinafter referred to as "Visitor") seeking admission to any Court Building shall be subject to a security screen, which may include a personal search, or a search or security screening of personal effects to be brought into any of the Court Buildings.

2. Use of portable electronic devices (PEDs)

A. For purposes hereof "portable electronic device" shall be deemed to include (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; and (vii) any other electronic personal communication device.

B. For purposes hereof, PED shall not include a camera, a video camera, video or audio recording equipment, or a recording device that is not otherwise a component of a PED.

C. Authorized Persons shall include an active or retired judge, a magistrate, an attorney-at-law who possesses and presents a valid state bar identification card, a law enforcement officer as defined in §9.1-101, a probation officer who possesses and presents proper credentials and who is at the Courthouse in the conduct of his or her official duties, a state or local government agency employee who possesses and presents proper credentials and who is at the Courthouse in the conduct of his or her official duties, a court reporter during the course of his or her official duties within the Courthouse, and any other individual, including media representatives who have been authorized to possess a PED in the Court upon a determination by the Court or Sheriff

of the City or County in which the Court sits to the effect that such individual's possession of a PED does not pose a security risk or threat and that access to such PED is necessary for conducting such individual work or business in the Court.

D. A visitor is any person other than an Authorized Person.

E. All PEDs possessed by visitors must be **OFF** at all times while in a Courthouse. The Sheriff may require PED's to be placed in designated security pouches or lockers. If the device is needed to present evidence, it may be turned on only with permission of the Judge presiding over the proceeding.

F. All PEDs possessed by Authorized Persons must in silent mode at all times within a Courthouse.

G. Visitors may only make or receive phone calls on the porch or other exterior portions of the Courthouse grounds.

H. Authorized Persons may make or receive phone calls in hallways or lobbies if they can do so in a nondisruptive manner.

I. **NO PHOTOGRAPHS, AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING OR AUDIO OR VIDEO LIVESTREAMING** shall be permitted by Authorized Persons or Visitors without prior authorization by a Judge.

J. Nothing in this rule shall limit the Court's authority to regulate media coverage pursuant to Virginia Code §19.2-266.

K. A Judge may permit exceptions to this order for ceremonial proceedings such as investitures, adoptions, weddings and Recovery Court graduations.

L. Any person using a PED or other Electronic Device in violation of this or any other Court order or policy may be removed from the Courthouse, found in contempt of Court, and subject to penalties as provided by law. Any PED or other Electronic Device used in violation of this or any other Court order or policy may be confiscated, and the Sheriff shall not be responsible or liable for any damage to or loss of a confiscated device.

3. Food and Drink

Visitors may not bring food or drink into Courthouses.

No food or drink may be consumed in public areas or Courtrooms, except water may be made available to litigants, counsel and jurors.

4. Clothing/Conduct

All persons entering the Courthouse must dress and at all times conduct themselves in a respectful and appropriate manner that is indicative of the dignity of Court proceedings.

5. General provisions for safe and efficient use of Court Buildings

a. All entranceways, corridors, stairs and approaches to Courtrooms, offices, and other rooms in the Court Buildings and the exterior grounds appurtenant to Court Buildings shall be kept clear.

b. No activities that disrupt or have a tendency to interfere with the business of the Courts or the persons entering or exiting the Court Buildings shall be permitted within the Court Buildings or on their adjacent or surrounding grounds.

Any law enforcement officer shall have discretion and authority to enforce this ORDER and any violations hereof shall be addressed by all available legal means or remedies, including, but not limited to, criminal prosecution, contempt or physical removal.

6. Posting Notice of this Policy

This Order shall be posted on the Court's home page on the Virginia Judicial System website; on the Court's local website; at the Courthouse entrance; and in the Clerk's Office.

ENTERED: This 20 day of JUNE, 2026.



EDWARD K. STEIN, JUDGE