



## FRANKLIN COURTHOUSE PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

### I. Purpose

A. To maintain courthouse security, decorum, and the orderly administration of justice while ensuring reasonable access to the courts and compliance with Virginia law governing portable electronic devices.

B. This policy applies solely to visitors to the court and shall not infringe upon the right of the Sheriff to enforce any policy for persons not defined as visitors to the court under Virginia law governing portable electronic devices.

### II. Definitions

A. "Portable Electronic Device" shall have the same meaning as provided by Virginia law and includes personal laptops, tablets, mobile telephones, smart watches, electronic book readers, electronic calendars, and other electronic personal communication devices.

B. "Visitor to the Court" shall have the same meaning as provided by Virginia law.

### III. General Requirements

A. Except as provided herein, visitors to the court may only use portable electronic devices in the lobby of the courthouse facility.

B. In all other areas of the courthouse, portable electronic devices will be powered down.

C. Unless prior authorization has been granted by the presiding judge of the court, no person shall use any portable electronic device within the entire courthouse, including the courthouse lobby, to:

1. Take photographs;
2. Make audio recordings;
3. Make video recordings; and/or

4. Livestream or transmit audio or video.

D. Upon arrival, the courthouse security personnel shall:

1. Screen the portable electronic device for contraband; and
2. Instruct the visitor to power down the electronic device.

E. A visitor who intends to present evidence contained on a portable electronic device shall notify court personnel before the scheduled proceeding whenever practicable.

#### IV. Exempt Persons

A. The following individuals may possess portable electronic devices while conducting official duties:

1. Active and retired judges;
2. Magistrates;
3. Licensed attorneys presenting valid bar identification;
4. Law-enforcement officers;
5. Court security officers;
6. Probation officers presenting proper credentials;
7. State and local government employees presenting proper credentials and conducting official business;
8. Court reporters acting within the scope of official duties; and
9. Any individual specifically authorized by the Sheriff or designee upon a determination that possession is necessary for courthouse business and does not present a security risk.

B. Nothing stated in this section is intended to infringe upon the right of the Sheriff to enforce any screening policy, including the screening of the

persons listed above, to ensure the safety of the courthouse and courthouse personnel.

C. Nothing in this policy limits the authority of the presiding judge to regulate the admission, use, or display of evidence.

V. Enforcement

A. Any portable electronic device possessed or used in violation of this policy or a court order may be confiscated by court security personnel.

B. Violations may also result in:

1. Removal from the courthouse;
2. Contempt proceedings when authorized by law; and/or
3. Other sanctions imposed by the court.

VI. Liability Waiver

A. The court and the Sheriff's Office shall not be liable for damage to or loss of devices stored or confiscated pursuant to this policy.

VII. Posting and Publication

A. This policy shall be:

1. Posted prominently at each public entrance to the courthouse;  
and
2. Posted on the court's website or other publicly accessible website used to communicate courthouse information.