

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF ARLINGTON COUNTY

**ORDER RELATING TO RECORDING EQUIPMENT
AND PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

By authority of the Chief Judges of the Circuit Court, General District Court, and Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court, and in accordance with Sections 16.1-69.35 and 17.1-128.2 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, it is **ORDERED** as follows:

1. **PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Portable personal computers, tablet computers, mobile telephones (including telephones with cameras and audio and video recording and transmission capabilities), smart watches when connected to mobile telephones, and e-book readers (hereafter, "Portable Electronic Devices") shall be permitted inside the Arlington County Courthouse effective July 1, 2026, subject to the following regulations:
 - a. **NON-PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** All other cameras, video cameras, video recording equipment and recording devices that are not a portable electronic device are prohibited beyond the entry points in the Courthouse except for use in photography of weddings taking place in the Courthouse as to which pre-arrangement has been made with the Sheriff. Prohibited photographic and video recording equipment may be permitted into the Courthouse by prior written authorization by any active Judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit or District.
 - b. **USE TO BROADCAST/TRANSMIT FROM INSIDE COURTHOUSE:** Photography, video recording, audio recording, making or receiving video calls, and/or other audio or video transmission from inside the Courthouse, (other than

use to make or receive an audio telephone call), is strictly prohibited without written permission of the Court or other authorized officer.

- c. **USE IN COMMON AREAS:** Subject to the prohibition in the preceding paragraph, persons possessing a Portable Electronic Device may use that device while in common areas of the Courthouse, such as lobbies and corridors, subject to further restrictions on the time, place, and manner of such use that are appropriate to maintain safety (including pedestrian traffic, ingress and egress), security, decorum, order and the proper administration of justice. Using a speakerphone, or playing audio that can be heard by others, is strictly prohibited in any common areas, unless as an ADA accommodation that has been authorized by a judge.
- d. **USE IN COURTROOMS:** The use of a Portable Electronic Device inside a courtroom for any purpose is prohibited unless expressly authorized by the presiding judge. Portable Electronic Devices must remain silent and be put away at all times.
- e. **JUROR USE:** Jurors may possess and use a Portable Electronic Device in the courthouse, except while in a courtroom. Jurors are strictly prohibited from using a Portable Electronic Device to conduct any research related in any way to the case on which the juror serves at any time during the juror's term of service. Jurors are prohibited from using a Portable Electronic Device to communicate about the case on which the juror serves until after the juror is excused at the end of the case.

f. **CONFISCATION OF EQUIPMENT AND EJECTION OF USER:** Persons using any Portable Electronic Device in violation of this Order may be ejected from the Courthouse and/or found in contempt of court and subject to penalties as provided by law for contempt and/or violation of criminal statutes and ordinances. Any Portable Electronic Device used in violation of this Order may be confiscated and shall be returned as directed by either the presiding judge or the Sheriff in their sole discretion. 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.

g. **FURTHER LIMITATIONS BY JUDGES:** A judge or other authorized officer may prohibit or further restrict the possession or use of any Portable Electronic Device if it interferes with the administration of justice, poses any threat to safety or security, or for any other reason within the sole discretion of the presiding judge or other authorized officer.

2. Nothing in this Order limits the Court's authority pursuant to Virginia Code §19.2-266 to regulate media coverage of judicial proceedings.
3. This Order is effective the 1st day of July 2026 and supersedes any prior order concerning these matters.

ENTERED this 23rd day of June, 2026.



Judith L. Wheat, Chief Judge