

**VIRGINIA: IN THE JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS
DISTRICT COURT OF THE CITY OF CHESAPEAKE**

**IN RE: POSSESSION AND USE OF PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES BY VISITORS
TO THE COURT**

ORDER

In order to fully implement Virginia Code § 16.1-69.35:4, which was enacted on May 20, 2026, the Court issues this order regarding possession and use of Portable Electronic Devices by Visitors to the Court, upon finding it necessary to maintain safety, security, proper behavior, order, and the administration of justice. Therefore, it is ORDERED as follows:

The Court's current policy regarding the possession and use of Portable Electronic Devices by Visitors to the Court is attached hereto and incorporated into this Order.

A willful violation of this order may be punished as contempt under Virginia Code § 18.2-456. This order shall be posted on the Virginia Judicial System website, the Court's local website, at the courthouse entrance, and in the Clerk's office.

This Order shall be in full force and effect until rescinded by the Court.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

ENTER: 7/1/2026



Chanel A. Gray, Chief Judge



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

CHANEL A. GRAY
CHIEF JUDGE

LORI B. GALBRAITH
JUDGE

DAVID L. JONES
JUDGE

WILFREDO BONILLA, JR.
JUDGE

CHESAPEAKE

JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT

301 ALBEMARLE DRIVE
SECOND FLOOR
CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA 23322-5501
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TOYA C. SOUTHALL
CLERK OF COURT

POLICY REGARDING POSSESSION AND USE OF PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES BY VISITORS TO THE COURT

1. Definition of "Portable Electronic Device":

The term "Portable Electronic Device" is defined to include personal computers, tablets, mobile telephones (including cellphones, and any telephone with a camera, audio, and video recording and transmission capabilities), electronic calendars, electronic book readers (e-book), smart watches, or any other electronic personal communication device.

2. Definition of "Visitor to the Court":

The term "Visitor to the Court" means a member of the public who is not 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 or court security officer, a probation officer who possesses and presents proper credentials and who is at the courthouse in the conduct of his official duties, a state or local agency employee who possesses and presents proper credentials and who is at the courthouse in the conduct of his official duties, a court reporter during the course of his official duties within the courthouse, and any other individual who has been authorized to possess a Portable Electronic Device in the court upon a determination by the sheriff of the city or county in which the court sits that such individual's possession of a Portable Electronic Device does not pose a security risk or threat and that access to such Portable Electronic Device is necessary for conducting such individual's work or business in the court.

3. Possession and Use of Portable Electronic Devices in the Courthouse and in the Courtroom:

The following policies and procedures govern the possession and use of Portable Electronic Devices by Visitors to the Court in the courthouse and in the courtroom.

A. In the Courthouse:

In due consideration of the confidential nature of juvenile and domestic relations proceedings, the desire of Visitors to the Court to have access to Portable Electronic Devices, and to ensure safety, security, proper behavior, order, and the proper administration of justice, Portable Electronic Devices are **not** permitted in the courthouse beyond the security checkpoint designated storage area except when possessed by: (i) attorneys-at-law who display a valid state bar identification card; (ii) police officers, sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, law enforcement agents or officials, probation officers, and magistrates possessing proper credentials while in the conduct of such person's official duties; (iii) Judges of the Commonwealth, both active and retired; (iv) City and State employees possessing proper credentials who are in the courthouse on official business; (v) court reporters while on official court business; (vi) employees of the Virginia Department of Forensic Science while attending court as a witness; (vii) foreign language interpreters attending court on official court business; or (viii) other individuals upon a determination by the Sheriff's Office that such individuals do not pose a security risk and the ability to access such device is necessary for their work at the courthouse or in the presentation of their case. Possession and use of Portable Electronic Devices by the preceding individuals is subject to security screening and the following rules:

- (1) All Portable Electronic Devices must be placed in silent mode, with vibrations and notifications turned off, at all times while within the courthouse.
- (2) The making or recording of audio or video recordings, or transmitting live video streaming, is strictly prohibited, except with the prior written authorization of the presiding judge.
- (3) Other electronic devices: Cameras, video cameras, video recording equipment, smart glasses, and any recording device/equipment that can capture audio or visual communication ("other electronic devices") not classified as Portable Electronic Devices are not allowed in the courthouse except for use at approved events, such as

investitures, ceremonies, and weddings. Other electronic devices may be allowed with prior written authorization of a presiding judge.

B. In the Courtroom:

A presiding judge may grant permission for the possession and use of Portable Electronic Devices by a Visitor to the Court in the courtroom when deemed appropriate. This allows Visitors to the Court to access and present evidence and to record proceedings in compliance with the law. The presiding judge may also impose specific restrictions on how these devices are used. If possession of such devices is authorized, the Sheriff's Office will escort the Visitor to the Court to the designated storage area for Portable Electronic Devices. The Sheriff's Office will maintain control of the device until the presiding judge permits the Visitor to the Court to access it. The Portable Electronic Device may only be used for the purposes and in the manner authorized by the presiding judge. Photography, video recording, audio recording, or any form of video transmission or communication from inside the courtroom is strictly prohibited without prior written authorization from the presiding judge.

C. Confiscation of Equipment and Ejection of User:

Any individual found using a Portable Electronic Device in violation of this or any other court order or policy may be removed from the courthouse, held in contempt of court, and face penalties as provided by law. Additionally, any Portable Electronic Device used in violation of this, or any other court order or policy may be confiscated. The Sheriff's Office will not be responsible or liable for any damage or loss of such confiscated devices.

D. Further Limitation by Judges:

A presiding judge may further restrict or prohibit the possession or use of any Portable Electronic Device under the following circumstances:

- (1) In accordance with Virginia § 19.2-266, to manage media coverage of judicial proceedings;
- (2) If the possession or use of a Portable Electronic Device may interfere with the administration of justice or pose a threat to safety or security; or
- (3) For any other appropriate reason.

4. Posting Notice of this Policy:

This policy shall be posted on the Virginia Judicial System website, the Court's local website, at the courthouse entrance, and in the Clerk's office.

5. Storage of Portable Electronic Devices:

The courthouse offers free storage for Portable Electronic Devices at the security checkpoint entrance for Visitors to the Court. Currently, only small devices, such as cellphones, can be stored. For assistance with larger devices, please contact the Clerk of Court at least three (3) business days before your hearing date to make arrangements.

The Sheriff's Office is not liable for any damage to or loss of stored devices.

**VIRGINIA: IN THE JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS
DISTRICT COURT OF THE CITY OF CHESAPEAKE**

IN RE: COURTHOUSE AND COURTROOM SECURITY

ORDER

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 53.1-120(A), the Sheriff shall ensure that the courthouses and courtrooms within this jurisdiction are secure from violence and disruption and shall designate deputies for this purpose.

In order to assist the Sheriff in their efforts to provide proper security for the courthouses and courtrooms, the following are prohibited in the courthouse and courtrooms of this Court: any (i) gun or other weapon designed or intended to propel a missile or projectile of any kind; (ii) frame, receiver, muffler, silencer, missile, projectile, or ammunition designed for use with a dangerous weapon; or (iii) other dangerous weapon, including explosives, stun weapons as defined in § 18.2-308.1, and those weapons specified in subsection A of § 18.2-308. Any such weapon shall be subject to seizure by a law-enforcement officer.

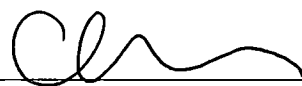
This prohibition does not apply to any police officer, sheriff, law-enforcement agent or official, conservation police officer, conservator of the peace, magistrate, court officer, judge, city or county treasurer, or commissioner or deputy commissioner of the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission while in the conduct of such person's official duties.

A willful violation of this Order may be punished as contempt under Virginia Code § 18.2-456 or as a Class 1 misdemeanor under § 18.2-283.1. This order shall be posted on the Virginia Judicial System website, the Court's local website, at the courthouse entrance, and in the Clerk's office.

This Order shall be in full force and effect until rescinded by the Court.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

ENTER: 7/1/2026



Chanel A. Gray, Chief Judge