

Augusta County Circuit Court Policy for the Use of Portable Electronic Devices

- **Definition of “Portable Electronic Device”**
 - The term “Portable Electronic Device” is defined to include personal computers, tablet computers, mobile telephones (including cell phones or any form of telephone with audio or video recording or transmission capabilities), electronic calendars, e-book readers, and “smart” watches.
- **Use of Portable Electronic Devices in the Records Office**
 - Subject to this court’s other policies, Portable Electronic Devices may be brought into the Records Office if they are kept on silent.
- **Devices in Upstairs Area Prohibited; Recording Prohibited**
 - Portable Electronic Devices shall not brought upstairs without authorization from the presiding judge.
 - Photography, video recording, or video transmission inside the courthouse is prohibited.
 - Audio recording inside the courthouse is prohibited without prior written authorization of the presiding judge.
- **Exception for Lawyers, Law Enforcement, Staff**
 - The following persons are presumed to have permission from the presiding judge to possess Portable Electronic Devices in the upstairs area: lawyers, law enforcement officers, probation officers, court services, and other court staff.
 - All persons who have Portable Electronic Devices in the upstairs area, including those who are presumed to have permission to do so, are to use such devices for court business only.
- **Penalties for Users; Confiscation of Devices**
 - Any person using a Portable 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 Portable Electronic Device used in violation of this policy will be confiscated, and the Sheriff shall not be responsible or liable for any damage to or loss of a confiscated device.
- **Further Limitations by Judge**
 - The judge may further limit or ban the possession or use of any Portable Electronic Device:
 - pursuant to Virginia Code § 19.2-266 (to regulate media coverage of judicial proceedings);
 - if possession or use of the Portable Electronic Device may or does interfere with the administration of justice or cause any threat to safety or security; or
 - for any other reason.