

Virginia:

In the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond, John Marshall Courts Building

STANDING ORDER ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES

THIS DAY the Standing Order on Electronic Devices entered September 23, 2025, is hereby **MODIFIED** to comport with the requirements of subsections C and F of Code § 17.1-128.2.¹ It shall be the **STANDING ORDER** of this Court that the possession or use of electronic devices inside the John Marshall Courts Building located at 400 North 9th Street, Richmond Virginia, 23219, shall be limited as outlined herein.

It is hereby **ORDERED** that:

- I. An active or retired judge may possess and use any electronic device except as otherwise provided by law.
- II. Subject to the limitations announced in subparts XII through XVII of this Order, a magistrate, a licensed attorney-at-law presenting a valid state bar identification card, a law enforcement officer as defined in § 9.1-101 or court security officer may, subject to the limitations announced herein, possess and use an electronic device other than a video camera or a web camera that is not part of a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A).²
- III. Subject to the limitations announced in subparts XII through XVII of this Order, a probation officer, state agency employee, or local agency employee presenting proper credentials who is at the courthouse in the conduct of their official duties, and a court reporter who is at the courthouse during the course of their official duties within the courthouse may, subject to the limitations announced herein, possess and use an electronic device other than a video camera or a web camera that is not part of a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A).
- IV. Subject to the limitations announced in subparts XII through XVII of this Order, “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 [of Richmond] that such individual’s possession of a

¹ In September of 2025, the chief judge consulted “with the ... chief judges of the ... district courts having jurisdiction in the district and with the sheriff of the city ... in which the courthouse is located.” Va. Code § 17.1-128.2(B).

² Systems for two-way audio-visual communication are available for use in an authorized virtual hearing or for an authorized virtual appearance.

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" may possess and use a portable electronic device as defined by Code §§ 16.1-69.35:4(A), subject to the limitations announced herein.

- V. Subject to the conditions announced herein, a visitor to the court is permitted to possess portable electronic devices in the courthouse and the courtrooms. Va. Code § 17.1-128.2(C).
 - A. A "visitor to the court" is any individual not described by subparts I through IV of this Order. Va. Code §§ 16.1-69.35:4(A), 17.128.2(A).
 - B. A "portable electronic device" means "(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; or (vii) any other electronic personal communication device," but "does not include a camera, a video camera, video or audio recording equipment, or a recording device that is not otherwise a component of a portable electronic device." Va. Code §§ 16.1-69.35:4(A), 17.128.2(A).
 - C. For purposes of this Order, the term "portable electronic device" shall not be interpreted to include smart glasses, which are not an "electronic personal communication device."
- VI. A visitor to the court must have prior written judicial authorization to possess any electronic device that is not a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A).
 - A. The prior written judicial authorization for the possession of the electronic device, other than a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A), must be given by the presiding judge assigned to the case for which the visitor is coming to court.³
 - B. The visitor must bring a physical copy of the prior written judicial authorization to the courthouse.
 - C. Strict compliance with all terms of the authorization is required.
- VII. A visitor to the court in possession of cellular phone, smart watch, smart glasses, or a fitness tracker shall follow the below-listed procedures necessary "to maintain safety, security, proper behavior, order, and the administration of justice." Va. Code § 17.1-128.2(C)(vi).
 - A. The device must be powered off, placed in a locked Yondr pouch, and remain locked inside the pouch while the visitor is inside the courthouse except as otherwise provided herein.
 - B. The Clerk of the Circuit Court or his designee may authorize the pouch to be unlocked while the visitor is in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office or record room.
 - C. The Clerk of the General District Court or her designee may authorize the pouch to be unlocked while the visitor is in the General District Court Clerk's Office.

³ The authorization will state the name of the visitor, date of the visit, and describe the electronic device that the visitor is authorized to bring into the court.

- D. The pouch will not be unlocked in the courtroom during court proceedings without the authorization of the presiding judge. Should the device be needed for purposes related to the case, for example for the presentation of evidence, the visitor should request authorization from the presiding judge.
- E. Except as provided in subpart D, any judge of the Circuit or General District Court may authorize that a pouch be unlocked.
- F. Except as provided in subpart D, the Sheriff or her designee may authorize that a pouch be unlocked.

VIII. The possession and use of any electronic device that serves a medical purpose (“medical electronic device”) is permitted.

- A. The term “medical electronic device” shall include but is not limited to electronic devices that (i) aid hearing or one of the other senses, (ii) measure blood sugar or blood pressure, (iii) provide medication, or (iv) express breast milk.
- B. Glasses with an electronic function that assists sight shall be considered a medical electronic device. However, smart glasses that do not have an electronic function that assist sight shall not be considered a medical electronic device. If a visitor to the courthouse requiring prescription lenses uses smart glasses, they may proceed as provided in subpart VI of this Order.
- C. A smart watch or fitness tracker will not be considered a medical electronic device solely because it is used to monitor or track general fitness and health data.
- D. A visitor to the court that has a medical electronic device that requires a cellular phone to control or assist the necessary functions of the device should request a medical device pouch upon entry to the courthouse. The phone will remain powered on inside the medical device pouch, which is designed to promote security while allowing the devices to communicate. Except during court proceedings, a designated member of court staff may unlock the medical device pouch without judicial authorization. Should the visitor need to access the phone inside the courtroom while court is in session, the presiding judge may authorize a member of court staff to unlock the medical device pouch during the proceedings or take a brief recess.

IX. Except as otherwise provided herein, a visitor to the court shall not leave an electronic device, including a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A), unattended unless the electronic device is powered off and secured in a locker inside the building’s entrance.

X. A visitor to the court may not use a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A) in the courtroom during court proceedings without the authorization of the presiding judge. Should the device be needed for purposes related to the case, for example for the presentation of evidence, the visitor should request authorization from the presiding judge.

- XI.** Except as otherwise provided herein, a visitor to the court may only use a portable electronic device in the below-listed designated areas of the courthouse. Va. Code § 17.1-128.2(C)(ii).
- A.** A visitor to the court may use a portable electronic device in an available witness room. If the portable electronic device is being used for any activity involving sound of any kind, the door to the witness room must remain shut while the device is being used for that purpose.
 - B.** A visitor to the court may use a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A) in any areas within the Circuit Court Clerk's Office, record room, or both, as may be designated for the use of such devices by the Clerk of the Circuit Court, in his discretion.
 - C.** A visitor to the court may use a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A) in any areas within the General District Court Clerk's Office as may be designated for the use of such devices by the Clerk of the General District Court, in her discretion.
- XII.** Any electronic device, including a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A), may be subject to security screening upon entrance to the courthouse, but courthouse personnel may not search or access any data on the device. Va. Code § 17.1-128.2(C).
- XIII.** The use of any electronic device, including a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A), in the courthouse or the circuit court courtrooms to take photographs, make audio or video recordings, or transmit live audio or video streaming is prohibited except with prior written authorization by a judge of the circuit court. Va. Code § 17.1-128.2(F).
- XIV.** The use of any electronic device, including a portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A), in the courthouse or the general district court courtrooms to take photographs, make audio or video recordings, or transmit live audio or video streaming is prohibited except with prior written authorization by a judge of the general district court. Va. Code § 16.1-69.35:4(F).
- XV.** Except as otherwise provided herein, all electronic devices, including any portable electronic device as defined by Code § 16.1-69.35:4(A), must be silenced or turned off while the device is inside the courthouse.
- XVI.** Electronic devices shall not be used in any courtroom in which court is in session except when the use of the electronic device is necessary and the necessity is directly related to the case currently being heard. Any other business, including any necessary emails, text messages, or phone calls, shall be conducted outside the courtroom. If the other business involves the use of the electronic device to make a phone call or engage in any other activity involving sound of any kind, the electronic device shall be used in an area and at a volume where the sound will not disturb court

proceedings. Individuals defined in subparts VII, VIII, and IX without an office in the courthouse may use an available witness room. The door to the witness room must remain shut while the device is being used for any purpose involving sound.

- XVII. The possession or use of electronic devices may be further limited or banned by a judge for any reason; reasons may include, but are not limited to, the following: (i) to regulate media coverage of judicial proceedings, see Va. Code § 19.2-266; (ii) prevent actual or potential interference with the administration of justice; or (iii) circumvent any actual or potential threat to safety or security. Va. Code § 17.1-128.2(C)(vi).

Any person using an electronic device in violation of this or any other court order, in violation of the terms of an authorization, or in violation of any other oral or written directive may be removed from the courthouse, found in contempt of court, and subject to other penalties as provided by law. Any portable electronic device used in violation of this order may be confiscated. Va. Code § 17.1-128.2(E).

The Clerk of Court of this Court is **DIRECTED** to record and keep this Order upon the order books. The Clerk is further directed to make a copy of this Order publicly available online and to post copies at the entrance of the courthouse and in the Clerk's Office.

It is so **ORDERED**.

ENTER:

July 10, 2026

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Richard B. Campbell, Chief Judge