MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Governing the Usage of Cameras and Recording Devices in Fourth District Court Facilities

Purpose:

The State of Minnesota Supreme Court's Rule 4 of the General Rules of Practice for the District Courts provides that no pictures or voice recordings, except the recording made as the official court record or as expressly provided by the Fourth District Court, shall be taken in any courtroom or area of a courthouse where courtrooms are located. This memorandum of understanding has been developed between the Fourth District Court and Hennepin County Administration to set forth procedures and define affected areas to ensure that this rule is enforced in Hennepin County buildings where the Fourth District, Hennepin County Courts, operates—while at the same time assuring general public access to county facilities.

Fourth District Court Facilities:

The Fourth District Court operates in the following Hennepin County facilities. It is in these areas that cameras and recording equipment would be prohibited:

1. Hennepin County Government Center
   a. Court Tower: Floors 3 through 19
   b. Administration Tower: Floor 17 (Housing Court)
   c. Street Level: Room A-190 (Hearing Office)

2. Hennepin County Public Safety Facility
   a. Floor 1: Courtrooms and Waiting Area immediately adjacent to the Courtrooms

3. Hennepin County Juvenile Justice Center
   a. Entire building

4. Hennepin County Family Justice Center
   a. Floor 1
   b. Floor 4
   c. Floor 5
   d. Floor 6

5. Hennepin County Brookdale Regional Center & Library
   a. Floor 1: District Court courtrooms, chambers, District Court administration area and waiting areas immediately adjacent to the courtrooms.

6. Hennepin County Southdale Regional Center & Library
   a. Floor 3: District Court courtrooms, chambers, District Court administration area and waiting areas immediately adjacent to the courtrooms.

7. Hennepin County Ridgedale Regional Center & Library
   a. Floor 3: District Court courtrooms, chambers, District Court administration area and waiting areas immediately adjacent to the courtrooms.

Enforcement:

The objective of this Memorandum of Understanding is to allow public access to county facilities but ensure the privacy of and protection of those accessing the court as well as District Court staff.

Media requests to film and/or record county activities will be managed by the Hennepin County Director of Public Affairs, or her designee. Hennepin County Public Affairs staff will work closely with the Hennepin County Department of Property Services and the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office to allow appropriate media access consistent with the Supreme Court rules and applicable law.

The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Court Security Division, provides security to the Fourth District Court, including:

- Providing personal protection to members of the judiciary, court officials, witnesses, jurors, defendants, the general public and others while they are engaged in the judicial process; and
- Maintain decorum within the courtroom to ensure safe, peaceful and effective operations of the Court.

With regard to this memorandum of understanding, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office will be responsible for monitoring and enforcing these procedures in the District Court areas.

Hennepin County Property Services Department, Security Division, provides routine and emergency building security services. Signs will be posted at appropriate entrances and /or at the weapons screening stations notifying individuals that cameras and recording devices cannot be used in the specified District Court areas. Security officers can provide clarification about the rules but will not confiscate cameras or recording devices.

Hours and Exceptions:

These procedures limiting camera and recording usage apply during regular court hours.

Exceptions would include:

- Wedding, adoption, citizenship or other proceedings within the courtroom or chambers of a Fourth District Judge, upon his or her approval.

- Filming as mutually agreed upon by the Hennepin County Director of Public Affairs and the Fourth District Court Administrator.

Termination:

Either party may terminate this Memorandum of Understanding with or without cause upon ninety (90) days advance written notice.

Signatures:

Lucy A. Wieland
Chief Judge
Fourth Judicial District

Dated 6-14-2006

Sandra L. Vargas
County Administrator
Hennepin County

Dated June 13, 2006

Attachment: Rule 4

Rule 4. Pictures and Voice Recordings

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No pictures or voice recordings, except the recording made as the official court record, shall be taken in any courtroom, area of a courthouse where courtrooms are located, or other area designated by order of the chief judge made available in the office of the court administrator in the county, during a trial or hearing of any case or special proceeding incident to a trial or hearing, or in connection with any grand jury proceedings. This rule shall be superseded by specific rules of the Minnesota Supreme Court relating to use of cameras in the courtroom or use of videotaped recording of proceedings to create the official recording of the case.

(Amended effective January 1, 1994.)