First District Policy for Electronic Devices in Court Facilities

1. For purposes of this policy "court facility" means the entire building if the building is used exclusively for court operations. If the building is not used exclusively for court operations, then "court facility" means courtrooms, court administration offices, other locations used for court functions and any adjacent common areas.
2. Except for cell phones, electronic tablets and lap top computers, any electronic device that is capable of recording pictures, video or audio is not permitted inside a court facility, except as allowed by Rule 4 of the General Rules of Practice – District Courts.
3. Cell phones, electronic tablets and lap top computers may be used in the common areas of a court facility, not including the courtrooms and administrative offices, provided such devices shall not be used for recording pictures, video or audio, or otherwise disrupting the business of the courts. All such devices shall be used in "SILENT" mode only.
4. Except for licensed attorneys, licensed law enforcement personnel and other persons authorized by the presiding judge, cell phones, electronic tablets and lap top computers may be brought into the courtroom, but shall first be powered OFF and not accessed or used in any manner.
5. Licensed attorneys, licensed law enforcement personnel and other authorized persons in the courtroom, may have cell phones, electronic tablets and lap top computers powered ON and in SILENT mode only for the purpose of obtaining information necessary to conduct their business with the courts. Voice communication, the composition or sending of emails, text messages or other electronic communication, recording of pictures, video or audio shall not be made or displayed in the courtroom by any person unless specifically approved by the presiding judge.
6. Law enforcement and court personnel are authorized to search persons and inspect electronic devices in any court facility to insure compliance with this policy. An electronic device that is possessed or used in a manner that is not in compliance with this policy may be seized. Any person violating this policy may be subject to a contempt of court order and the imposition of appropriate sanctions.
7. Under special circumstances the presiding judge is authorized to order a more or less restrictive policy concerning the possession or use of electronic devices in a particular court facility or courtroom.
8. A copy of this policy shall be posted at appropriate public locations at each court facility as determined by court administration and the facility manager.

Dated: May 9, 2014

Terrence E. Conkel
Chief Judge
First Judicial District