
ORDER REGARDING CAMERAS AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES
Houston County Justice Center Security

Effective May 1, 2025 and thereafter, the Court makes the following:

ORDER

DEFINITIONS

1. A “**Common Area**” includes hallways, restrooms, elevators, stairwells and conference rooms on the second floor of the Houston County Justice Center. It also includes any areas immediately adjacent to the offices wherein Department of Corrections, County Attorney and Court Administration conduct business.
2. A “**Recording Device**” is a device capable of recording pictures, video, or audio.
3. An “**Electronic Device**” is a device that is capable of recording, receiving and/or transmitting electronic data, including but not limited to cell phones, iPads, iPods, mp3 players, electronic tablets, or laptop computers.

GENERAL ORDER

4. In order to protect the integrity of Court proceedings, except as expressly permitted in other paragraphs of this Order, the **use of any device** to record pictures, video, or audio is at all times prohibited in the Master Courtroom, Hearing Room, Conference Room used for Zoom Hearings, and in areas immediately adjacent to the Court Administration Public Service Counter.

COURT ADMINISTRATION

5. A member of the public conducting business with Court Administration at their public service counter may use an Electronic Device for the purpose of retrieving data necessary to complete business, including scheduling of future hearings.

COURTROOMS

6. Except as expressly permitted in other paragraphs of this Order, and pursuant to Rule 4.02 of the General Rules of Practice, Recording Devices and Electronic Devices are not permitted inside the following rooms located on the second floor of the Houston County Justice Center:
 - a. Master Courtroom
 - b. Hearing Room
 - c. Conference Rooms used to facilitate Zoom court appearances.
7. For individuals wishing to not keep their Recording Devices and Electronic Devices in a vehicle outside, there are public lockers available on the first floor.
8. In the event an Electronic Device is necessary for a hearing participant to participate in a scheduled hearing, the participant must obtain permission first by the district court judge to retrieve their device for isolated purposes.
9. Exceptions:
 - a. Authorized Persons that may bring Recording Devices and Electronic Devices into the Master Courtroom, Hearing Room, or Conference Room used for Zoom Hearings:
 - i. State or County staff with regular offices or work areas on the court floor;
 - ii. The following people when they have business on the court floor: Attorneys, Houston County employees, interpreters, Law Enforcement, Guardians Ad Litem, State Court Personnel
 - iii. Members of the credentialed media acting in accordance with Rule 4 of the Minnesota General Rules of Practice for District Courts.
 - iv. People attending weddings, adoption hearings or investitures, provided they use such devices only as authorized by the judge or person presiding over the ceremony.
 - v. Other people expressly authorized by a Houston County District Court Judge.
 - b. Only law enforcement personnel may have body worn cameras on the second floor of the Houston County Justice Center and have authorization to record pictures, video, or audio in carrying out their lawful duties.

- c. For the express purpose of courtroom security, security cameras may be maintained in the Master Courtroom, Hearing room, Conference room used for the purpose of Zoom Hearings, and common areas adjacent to. Said footage shall be retained for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days. Security footage is not accessible to the public except as expressly authorized by the Chief Judge of the Third Judicial District.
- d. In order to maintain court decorum and prevent disruption in proceedings, any Recording Device and Electronic Device brought into a courtroom by authorized persons shall be silenced and stored away except when used for authorized purposes.

VIOLATIONS

- 10. Any person who fails to comply with this order shall be subject to being held in contempt of court and any appropriate sanctions. Law Enforcement is authorized to remove persons violating this Order and to confiscate any device used in violation of this Order.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

BY THE COURT:

Hon. Carmaine Sturino
District Court Judge
Third Judicial District