

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS**

GENERAL ORDER REGARDING COURTHOUSE SECURITY POLICIES

The following courthouse security policies are hereby adopted:

Weapons

The United States Marshals Service is directed to:

- (a) Adopt procedures excluding the carrying of weapons by any and all persons other than U.S. Marshals, Deputy U.S. Marshals and their designees, and Court Security Officers in all federal courthouses and off-site federal court facilities in the Eastern District of Texas, with the exception of off-site U.S. Probation facilities. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 930.
- (b) Post an appropriate notice regarding the weapons and electronic communication device policies at the public entrances of the courthouses in the Eastern District of Texas.

Electronic Communication Devices

This policy pertains to the use of electronic devices by court staff, members of the bar, and the public in the courthouses of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas. The presiding judge(s) of a particular courthouse or courtroom may deviate by general standing order or courtroom exemption order as they may find appropriate.

For purposes of this Order, electronic communication devices include, but are not limited to: cellular phones; smartphones (e.g., iPhones, Android devices, and other mobile phones that perform many of the functions of a computer); laptop computers; tablets (e.g., iPads); devices that wirelessly connect to computers and smartphones to transmit data (e.g., smartwatches, earpieces, headphones, and fitness trackers); and audio recorders, still cameras, and digital or other types of video cameras that connect wirelessly to other devices.

- (a) **Who May Regularly Possess:** Law enforcement officers, court employees, and other tenants of the courthouse may bring electronic communication devices into the courthouses.
- (b) **Who May Possess Subject to Screening and Clearance:** Possession of electronic communication devices in courthouses is prohibited, except by:
 - (1) attorneys who present photo identification and a current bar registration card from this or any other federal or state court;
 - (2) staff associated with such attorneys who are vouched for by such attorneys;

(3) only after selection for a jury panel, jurors who are selected to serve may be allowed to maintain possession of cellular or smartphones for the duration of the trial so long as the device(s) remain in the jury deliberation room and are not brought into the courtroom, and such is approved by the presiding judicial officer; and

(4) other individuals who are granted specific permission by the presiding judge(s).

(c) **Unauthorized Use:** No person shall use an electronic communication device to take photographs or make audio or video recordings or transmissions of court proceedings in any public area in the courthouse or any other location in which court business and proceedings are conducted, unless authorized by a judicial officer.

Electronic communication devices may not be used for phone calls in the courtroom and may not otherwise be used in any manner that disrupts or interferes with judicial proceedings. Ring tones and any other functional sound produced by devices must be disabled while in the courthouse.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in confiscation of the device, removal from the courtroom or courthouse, or other sanctions by the court.

This Order supersedes General Order 14-4 and will be effective April 1, 2018.

Signed this 1st day of March, 2018.

FOR THE COURT:



RODNEY GILSTRAP
Chief Judge