

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT OF THE COUNTY OF CHESTERFIELD

IN RE: RULES GOVERNING THE COURT BUILDINGS AT 9500 COURTHOUSE ROAD AND THE HISTORIC 1917 COURTHOUSE AT 10011 IRON BRIDGE ROAD, CHESTERFIELD, VIRGINIA

The Court is of the opinion the rules set forth below are necessary to properly maintain security, safety, order, and decorum in all offices, courtrooms, and environs within the court buildings at 9500 Courthouse Road and the Historic 1917 Courthouse at 10011 Iron Bridge Road ("the court buildings"). Accordingly, pursuant to *Code of Virginia* § 8.01-4 and § 53.1-120, it is ORDERED as follows:

1. All persons seeking admission to the court buildings shall be screened by magnetometer and, if requested to do so by the Sheriff, Sheriff deputies, or Sheriff civilian security staff, shall submit to a personal search or health screening before being admitted.
2. No firearms or weapons of any kind shall be brought into the court buildings. The prohibition shall not apply to any law enforcement officer when any such person is in the courthouse for the lawful performance of official duties and also displays identification satisfactory to security staff of the courthouse.
3. Visitors to the court buildings shall not bring into the court buildings portable electronic devices (defined as personal, laptop, or tablet computers, mobile telephones, including cell phones and any form of telephone with cameras and audio and video recording and transmission capabilities, electronic calendars, e-book readers, and "smart" watches) or other technological, electronic, or communications devices except as otherwise provided by law, or herein, or by written Order of this Court or the Chesterfield General District Court.
4. In the lawful performance of official duties and with valid, proper credentials, the following individuals may bring portable electronic devices into the court buildings:
 - a. Licensed attorneys.
 - b. Court reporters.
 - c. Foreign language interpreters and interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing.
 - d. Law enforcement officers.
 - e. Jury Commissioners.
 - f. Authorized representatives of the news media; use of devices allowed only in areas of the court buildings designated by the Sheriff. Devices shall not be used in the courtrooms at any time. A Judge may further limit or ban the possession or use of any device pursuant to *Va. Code* § 19.2-266 (to regulate media coverage of judicial proceedings).
 - g. Title searchers; use of devices allowed only in the Circuit Court Clerk Record Room.
5. Those authorized herein to bring portable electronic devices into the court buildings must completely silence all sound and notification functions while in a courtroom, and all devices must be placed in silent mode, such as vibrate, at all times while inside the court buildings. No photographs, still or otherwise,

shall be taken of jurors entering or leaving the court buildings. No one shall be permitted to make any video or audio recordings or to transmit live audio or video streaming within the court buildings.

6. Any device used in violation of this or any other Court Order or policy may be confiscated, and the Sheriff shall not be responsible or liable for any damage or loss of a confiscated device. A Judge may further limit or ban the possession or use of any device if possession or use may or does interfere with the administration of justice or cause any threat to safety or security or for any other reason.
7. All entranceways, corridors, and approaches to courtrooms, offices, and other rooms in the court buildings shall be kept clear for the purpose of free access thereto by those employed therein, or those who have business to transact in the court buildings, subject to security measures undertaken by the Sheriff and his deputies with the approval of a Court.
8. The courtroom security deputies shall monitor courtroom ingress and egress at all times. Prior to the opening of Court, the public shall be admitted to each courtroom at the discretion and under the supervision of the courtroom bailiffs. After the public is seated and counsel are in place, the bailiff shall notify the Judge and formally convene the Court session.
9. All activities within the courtrooms and common areas of the court buildings shall be consistent with the decorum required of legal proceedings. No activities that disrupt or have a tendency to disrupt the business of the Courts shall be allowed within the court buildings or on their exterior grounds.
10. The area of each courtroom within the rail is reserved for the defendant, counsel, members of the Bar, and court personnel. No one else will enter without permission of the Court.
11. Items received as evidence shall be handled only by court personnel. Attorneys, witnesses, and jurors may handle evidence only by leave of Court.
12. The Court reserves the right to designate seating accommodations within each courtroom.
13. Entities granted permission by the Circuit Court to use the Historic 1917 Courthouse may not use, move, disconnect, or modify any technology without the express written consent of the Circuit Court and the availability of authorized court personnel to oversee any arrangements authorized.
14. Smoking and "vaping" are prohibited within the court buildings.
15. This Order shall be posted on the websites and in the Clerk's Offices of the Circuit and General District Courts and at all courthouse entrances.

Nothing in these rules is intended to preclude the formulations or application of more restrictive rules regarding criminal trials in the court buildings. This Order supersedes any previous orders inconsistent herewith.

ENTER:



Edward A. Robbins, Jr., Chief Judge