

50th District Court Policy Regarding the Use of Portable Electronic Devices

Pursuant to MCR 8.115, January 8, 2020, this policy governs the use of portable electronic devices in the 50th District Court. Portable electronic devices include any mobile device capable of electronically storing, accessing, or transmitting information. This encompasses portable computers of all description, smart and cell phones, cameras and other audio or video recording devices, a personal digital assistant (PDA), or other devices that provide internet access, and any similar items.

1. Electronic communications devices must be turned off or set to silent mode prior to entering a courtroom. This includes attorneys.
2. No one, including attorneys, may make or take a phone call on an electronic portable device in a courtroom unless that use is specifically allowed by the judge presiding over that courtroom.
3. No one may use a portable electronic device to take photographs or for audio or video recording, broadcasting, or live streaming unless that use is specifically allowed by the judge presiding over that courtroom. *The only exception to this is requests for film or electronic media coverage of court proceedings as permitted by Administrative Order 1989-1.*
4. No one may photograph, record, broadcast, or live stream any juror or anyone called to the court for jury service or as a witness without that person's consent.
5. Jurors must turn off their portable electronic devices while present in a courtroom. Jurors may be required to surrender their electronic devices during deliberations. Use of portable electronic devices during deliberations is prohibited.
6. No one may use a portable electronic device to communicate in any way with any courtroom participant including, but not limited to, a party, a witness, or juror at any time during any court proceeding.
7. In areas of the courthouse outside the courtroom, no one may photograph, record, broadcast, or live stream an individual without their consent.
8. Allowable uses of portable electronic devices in a courtroom include retrieving or storing information (including notetaking), accessing Internet, and sending/receiving text messages or information without interruption to the courtroom.
9. Portable electronic devices may be used to reproduce public court documents from the clerk's office as long as the device leaves no mark or impression on the document and does not unreasonably interfere with the operation of the clerk's office.
10. Court managers, judges, court administrator or a member of court administration, may limit or terminate permission to use a portable electronic device if an individual engages in activities that are disruptive to court operations or compromise court security.
11. Failure to comply with this policy may result in a fine, including confiscation of the device, incarceration, or both for contempt of court.

Dated:

1-7-22



CHIEF JUDGE CYNTHIA T. WALKER