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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

IN RE:
ELECTRONIC DEVICES
PERMITTED IN COURTHOUSES

GENERAL ORDER 08-21
ORDER DEFINING ELECTRONIC
DEVICE POLICY FOR WESTERN
DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
COURTHOUSES

This order pertains to the use of electronic devices by the bar, media, and the public in the courthouses and other dedicated spaces housing the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington. These are the Seattle United States Courthouse and the Tacoma Union Station United States Courthouse. The policy also applies to all other places in which the court holds session. It supplements the provisions of Local Civil Rule 78.

Visitors to any of the Western District of Washington courthouses and dedicated spaces are allowed to carry and make use of various electronic devices as set out by this policy.

1 General Rules:

- 2 1. Anyone may bring into the courthouse electronic devices, such as a smartphone,
3 laptop, tablet computer or a similar device having wireless communications
4 capability.
5
- 6 2. Except for courtrooms, persons may use such devices in public areas of the
7 courthouse to make telephone calls and to transmit and receive data
8 communications, such as email or text messages, or to access the Internet. For
9 reasons of privacy, safety, and security, use of these devices to take photographs
10 or for audio or video recording or transmission is prohibited in all areas of the
11 courthouse, and especially in the security screening areas. There shall be no
12 photography of judicial officers or court staff within the public areas of the
13 courthouses without their permission.
14
- 15 3. In courtrooms, persons may use such devices to take notes, transmit and receive
16 data communications, and access the Internet. This includes media members
17 who are transmitting written accounts of the proceeding to a wider audience
18 using various means. Persons may not use these devices for telephone calls,
19 photographs or audio or video recording or transmission. Telephone ringtones
20 and other functional sounds produced by devices must be disabled while in the
21 courtroom. Only silent keyboards may be used in the courtrooms.
22 Photographing, transmitting, or recording any court proceedings from a location
23 outside the courthouse in conjunction with a remote appearance, or any other
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1 remote court proceeding conducted by telephone or video conference is also
2 prohibited.

- 3
- 4 4. A presiding judge may prohibit or further restrict use of such devices by all
5 persons prior to or during a proceeding when necessary to protect the rights of
6 the parties or to assure the orderly conduct of the proceedings.
- 7
- 8 5. Advance written permission from the Chief Judge is required for members of the
9 bar, media, and the public wishing to photograph, video record, or audio record
10 in the courthouse, provided, however, that with the consent of the presiding
11 judge—or under such conditions as the presiding judge may prescribe—some
12 variations of this rule may be allowed for ceremonial occasions.
- 13
- 14 6. Failure to comply with this order may result in either a Court Security Officer or
15 a United States Marshal directing the violator to remove any photo or video from
16 the violator’s electronic device that was created in violation of this policy. The
17 violator shall sign a statement that any image obtained through photograph or
18 video taken within the courthouse has been removed from the electronic device.
19 The Court Security Officer or Marshal shall obtain from any violator who does
20 not comply with such directive the violator’s name and address and inform such
21 violator that the noncompliance may result in that person being subject to civil
22 contempt proceedings in this court. If the creation of any photograph or video
23 constitutes a violation of any federal crime, the violator may be subject to arrest.
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This order is entered with the agreement of the judges of the court.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated this 30th day of April, 2021.



RICARDO S. MARTINEZ
CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE