

Standing Order: Possession and Use of Electronic Devices in the Courtroom

Pursuant to the inherent authority of the Presiding Judge to maintain the dignity, impartiality, and decorum of the courtroom, in order to prevent the intentional or unintentional intimidation of any person, including but not limited to participants in court proceedings and jurors, and in accordance with Rule 18c of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, until such time as the Supreme Court of Texas adopts uniform rules for the recording and broadcasting of court proceedings, the following Standing Order governs the possession and use of Electronic Devices in the courtroom. *See also, Rules of Decorum, 4.j. Appendix 2 to the Local Rules for the Courts of Dallas County “(Before entering a courtroom all persons shall first ensure that all cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices as appropriate are turned off or configured in such a manner so as to prevent any interruption of the proceedings before the court.”)*

Possession and Use of Electronic Devices in the Courtroom

NO electronic device, including, but not limited to, cellular phones, pagers, laptop computers and personal digital assistants (PDAs) (hereinafter “Electronic Devices”) may be used in the courtroom by any person without the prior approval of the judge, except as set forth in this Standing Order.

Whether the permission or consent of the court, parties, witness or other persons to be recorded is obtained, the court in its discretion may deny, limit or terminate use of Electronic Devices in its sole discretion.

No person, witness or party shall give consent in exchange for payment or other consideration.

No recording or photograph taken by consent may be published or posted without the express written consent of the person portrayed.

Any audio or visual recording of any type made during a proceeding pursuant to this Standing Order shall not be considered as part of the official court record.

Possession of Electronic Devices

Attorneys. Attorneys having business before the court may bring Electronic Devices into the courtroom on the day of their business with the court. This permission includes the staff employed by the attorney to assist in the attorney’s business with the court.

Witnesses. Witnesses who are scheduled to testify before the Court may bring, on the day they are scheduled to appear before the court, such Electronic

Devices as are necessary to aid in their testimony, IF the attorney who is calling the witness has obtained permission from the Judge before whom the witness is appearing.

Jurors. Venire panel members and jurors who are brought into court for jury service may keep in their possession Electronic Devices, but are instructed that the same must be turned all the way off while in the courtroom, not accessed during court proceedings or jury deliberations, and is subject to strict adherence to instructions to the jurors issued by the court in accordance with Rule 226a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

Employees. State and County employees may bring personal Electronic Devices into the courtroom but those Electronic Devices may not be used without the court's express authorization.

Use of Electronic Devices

Inside of Courtroom. All Electronic Devices must be turned off at all times inside the courtroom unless permission is obtained from the presiding judge. Attorneys and staff during trial and all court proceedings, shall advise the court of the intent to use Electronic Devices such as laptops and tablets to take notes, access files, exhibits for research, or for use in conjunction with the court's audio-visual equipment. Usage shall not delay or disrupt court proceedings, and Electronic Devices permitted to be used shall be placed on silent mode unless otherwise instructed.

Outside of Courtroom. Electronic Devices may be used outside of the courtroom so long as they do not serve to disrupt court proceedings.

Photography & Recording Prohibited

At no time within the courtroom may any Electronic Device be used to make a photograph or recording in any fashion, whether audio, video or otherwise. Upon the consent of the court, recording or photography is permitted under the following limited circumstances:

1. Ceremonial proceedings such as marriage ceremonies, investitures or the swearing in of new lawyers.
2. For educational purposes
3. Civil court proceedings with the consent on the record of the parties, witnesses, jurors or any other person to be recorded or portrayed. Such

consent may be withdrawn at any time, and thereafter all recording shall immediately cease.

The Court's consent shall immediately be withdrawn should the photography or recording unduly distract the participants or impair the dignity of the proceedings.

Social Media

Social Media, including but not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Pinterest, SnapChat, Twitter, or any other similar platform (hereinafter "Social Media") shall not be accessed while in the courtroom or court offices by attorneys, their employees or litigation support team, jurors, or witnesses, without the consent of the presiding judge. The venire panel and jurors will be made aware of the practice of attorneys and their staff to review the Social Media sites of jurors.

Broadcast of Proceedings Prohibited

Broadcasting of court proceedings is strictly prohibited unless the presiding judge grants permission to do so on the record, with the consent of the parties and all persons to be recorded or portrayed, and in accordance with Supreme Court Docket No. 92-0067 relative to Rules for Recording and Broadcasting Court Proceedings in the Civil Courts of Dallas County, which Rules may be found on this Court's website and in the courtroom.

Unauthorized Possession or Use of an Electronic Device

Unauthorized possession or use of an Electronic Device in the courtroom may subject the offender to suspension or limitation of these privileges, confiscation of the Electronic Device, and/or punishment for contempt of court.

SIGNED THIS 24th DAY OF October, 2017



BONNIE LEE GOLDSTEIN, JUDGE
44TH CIVIL JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT