

*Third Judicial District*  
**ELECTRONICS IN COURTROOMS and HEARING ROOMS  
RESOLUTION AND POLICY**

In accordance with the provisions set forth in Judicial Council Policy 521:

- It is the policy of the Minnesota Judicial Branch that attorneys and self-represented litigants are permitted to use electronic devices in courtrooms and hearing rooms to assist with calendar issues and other case processing matters.
- Each judicial district shall establish a policy to address what is acceptable regarding the possession and use of electronic devices by other court participants and by court visitors, while at the same time not interfering with the discretion of the presiding judicial officer to operate the courtroom in an appropriate manner.
- Each district plan shall be accompanied by an implementation plan designed to inform court visitors and court participants of the policy.

WHEREAS,

It is hereby resolved that the Judges of the Third Judicial District shall adopt the following General Principles and Electronics in Courtrooms and Hearing Rooms Policy in accordance with Minnesota Judicial Branch Policy 521, and

WHEREAS,

The Judges of the Third Judicial District acknowledge that the Rules of Court Decorum apply to all court sessions regardless of the use of electronic devices.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES and POLICY:**

1. For purposes of this policy “court facility” means the entire building if the building is used exclusively for court operations. If the building is not used exclusively for court operations, then “court facility” means courtrooms, court administration offices, other locations used for court functions and any adjacent common areas. Law libraries and county offices connecting to the defined court areas are excluded.
2. Except for cell phones, electronic tablets and laptop computers, any electronic device that is capable of recording pictures, video or audio is not permitted inside a court facility, except as allowed by Rule 4 of the General Rules of Practice – District Courts.
3. Cell phones, electronic tablets and laptop computers may be used in the common areas of a court facility, not including the courtrooms and administrative offices, provided such devices shall not be used for recording pictures, video or audio, or otherwise disrupting the business of the courts. All such devices shall be used on SILENT (not vibrate) mode only.
4. Except for licensed attorneys, licensed law enforcement personnel and other persons authorized by the presiding judge, cell phones, electronic tablets and laptop computers may be brought into the courtroom, but shall first be powered OFF and not accessed or used in any manner.
5. Licensed attorneys, licensed law enforcement personnel and other authorized persons in the courtroom, may have cell phones, electronic tablets and laptop computers powered ON and on SILENT (not vibrate mode) for the purpose of obtaining information necessary to conduct their business with the courts. Voice communication, the composition or sending of emails, text messages or other electronic communication, recording of pictures, video or audio shall not be made or displayed in the courtroom by any person unless specifically approved by the presiding judge.

- a. Permissible uses to ‘conduct business with the courts’ include but are not limited to determining schedule availability for court hearings, accessing case files, taking notes during hearings or trials, and research relevant to the instant case. Usage shall not delay or disrupt court proceedings. This section of the policy shall also apply to probation agents or social service staff doing court work for the courtroom.
  - b. Cell phones, electronic tablets and laptop computers may be used in courtrooms by news media personnel for the limited purpose of making notes regarding the proceedings. Usage shall not disrupt court proceedings. Use of such devices in the courtroom shall be disclosed to the Court Clerk or Bailiff prior to its use in the courtroom.
6. An electronic device that is possessed or used in a manner that is not in compliance with this policy may be seized by the court. Any person violating this policy may be subject to a contempt of court order and the imposition of appropriate sanctions.
  7. Under special circumstances the presiding judge is authorized to order a more or less restrictive policy concerning the possession or use of electronic devices in a particular court facility or courtroom.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:**

A copy of this policy shall be posted at appropriate public locations within each Third Judicial District court facility as determined by the Court Administrator and Chambered Judge(s).

Approved by the Third Judicial District bench: January 30, 2015.

Revised by the Third Judicial District bench: April 23, 2015.