
Amended Order Establishing Rules Regarding Use Of Electronic Devices In Court Facilities¹

The above-entitled matter came before the Honorable Leonardo Castro, Chief Judge of the Second Judicial District on the request of the Second Judicial District Court Administrator to amend a previous Administrative Order regarding the possession and use of **Recording Devices and Electronic Devices** in courtrooms and other areas of a **Courthouse Complex** in the Second Judicial District. Pursuant to the administrative authority of the Chief Judge under Minn. Stat. § 484.69, subd. 3; the inherent judicial power of the Court under Article 1, § 8, Article 3, § 1, and Article 6, § 1 of the Minnesota Constitution; Rule 4.01 of the General Rules of Practice for the District Courts, and Minnesota Judicial Branch Policy 521, the court issues the following Order:

Order

1. For purposes of this Order, the following definitions apply:
 - a. A **“Courthouse Complex”** is any building where court functions are conducted in the Second Judicial District.
 - b. A **“Common Area”** includes hallways, restrooms, elevators, stairwells, and conference rooms on a floor where a courtroom is located, a jury assembly area and areas adjacent to it, court administrative offices and areas adjacent to them, court administration customer service counters and areas adjacent to them, and the floor on which a Grand Jury has been convened.
 - c. A **“Recording Device”** is a device capable of recording pictures, video, or audio.
 - d. An **“Electronic Device”** is a device that is capable of recording, receiving and/or transmitting electronic data, including but not limited to cell phones, iPads, iPods, mp3 players, electronic tablets, or laptop computers.
2. Except as expressly permitted in other paragraphs of this Order, **Recording Devices** are not permitted in any courtroom or **Common Area** of a **Courthouse Complex**.

¹ The Minnesota Judicial Branch has republished this order to make it digitally accessible. There were no substantive changes. This order was previously signed by Chief Judge Leonardo Castro on May 16, 2024, and this order is effective on that date.

3. **Electronic Devices** are permitted and may be used in the **Common Areas** of a **Courthouse Complex** but such devices shall not be used for taking pictures or recording video or audio. In addition, electronic devices shall not be used to disrupt court business and they shall be used in "SILENT" mode only.
4. **Electronic Devices** and **Recording Devices** are permitted and may be used to take photos, video, and audio in Memorial Hall and the first-floor elevator lobby of the St. Paul City Hall - Ramsey County Courthouse and the first-floor public lobby area of the Juvenile Family Justice Center.
5. Except as provided in paragraphs 6 and 7, **Electronic Devices** are permitted and may be brought into a courtroom but must first be powered OFF and not accessed or used.
6. Only licensed attorneys, justice system professionals, law enforcement personnel, and persons explicitly authorized by the Judicial Officer presiding in the courtroom, may use **Electronic Devices** in a courtroom. Only law enforcement personnel may have body worn cameras in a courtroom. These **Electronic Devices** may be powered ON but must be kept and operated only in SILENT mode. Any authorized use of **Electronic Devices** must not distract the proceedings pursuant to the Rules of Decorum. In addition, voice communication and the recording of pictures, video, or audio are prohibited in courtrooms unless specifically approved by the presiding judge or judicial officer pursuant to Rule 4.02 of the Rules of General Practice.
7. Cameras, video equipment, filming equipment, and audio recording equipment may be used in courtrooms by authorized court personnel as part of their duty to keep an accurate record, or for interactive video hearings pursuant to rule or order of the Supreme Court.
8. Pursuant to Rule 4.02(a) of the Rules of General Practice, for the express purpose of courtroom security, security cameras may be maintained in Second District courtrooms, conference rooms, court administration offices, jury and grand jury assembly areas, and common areas adjacent to all Second District spaces, including but not limited to customer service counters and waiting areas, hallways, elevators, and stairwells. Security footage shall be retained for 60 days. Security footage is not accessible to the public except as expressly authorized by the Chief Judge of the Second District.
9. Law enforcement, judges, and judicial officers are authorized to remove persons from court proceedings to ensure compliance with this policy. Any **Electronic Device** or **Recording Device** that is possessed or used in a manner that is not in compliance with this Order may be seized. Any person violating this Order risks being found in contempt of court and facing the imposition of appropriate sanctions.

10. Exceptions to this Order may be made only by order of the chief judge, the chief judge's designee, or by any judge or judicial officer of the Second District pursuant to Rule 4.02 of the Rules of General Practice.
11. Any judge or judicial officer who decides to allow the use of **Recording Devices** in their courtroom when court is in session shall notify other judges or judicial officers on the floor.
12. This Order is effective immediately and supersedes any previous policy or Order issued by the Chief Judge of the Second Judicial District. The Second Judicial District Court Administrator is directed to post a copy of this Order in all Second Judicial District **Court Complexes** and on the Second District website.

January 14, 2025

By the Court:

Sara Grewing
Chief Judge of District Court