

NOTICE

Cell Phones, Other Electronic Devices, and Cameras in Court Facilities

Effective April 1, 2022

Under Maryland Rule 16-208, possession and use of cell phones, computers, cameras, and other electronic devices may be limited or prohibited in designated areas of court facilities. This Notice describes the Rule.

Electronic devices such as cell phones, cameras, personal computers, and other such devices may be brought into a court facility but may be used **only** in accordance with the Rule and the court's orders.

- **All electronic devices may be inspected by court security personnel.**
- **Security or other court personnel may confiscate an electronic device for misuse.** As described below, personnel may also collect electronic devices from persons in certain designated areas of the court facility.
- **An attorney in a proceeding currently being heard, their employees, and their agents are permitted the reasonable and lawful use of an electronic device in connection with the proceeding** provided that:
 - the electronic device makes no audible sound;
 - the electronic device is positioned so the screen is unseen by the trier of fact or any witness;
 - the electronic device is not used to record any part of the proceeding; and
 - the electronic device is not used to communicate with any other person during the proceeding without the express permission of the court.
- **A court may not deny reasonable and lawful use of an electronic device in a courtroom by an attorney, except upon a finding of good cause made on the record.**
- **The taking, recording, or transmitting of photographs, videos, or other visual images by cell phone or any other device is prohibited in the court facility at all times,** unless the court expressly grants permission in a specific instance.
- An electronic device **may not** be used in a manner that interferes with court proceedings or the work of court personnel or that violates any court order.
- **The court may decide to limit or prohibit the possession or use of electronic devices in designated areas, including courtrooms.** In that event, the court will designate the restricted area and provide for the collection of devices from persons entering that area and the return of the devices to those persons when they leave the area.
- **An electronic device may not be brought into a jury deliberation room after deliberations have begun.**

- **Except as provided in the previous paragraphs all electronic devices must remain OFF AND INOPERABLE inside the courtroom** unless the court expressly grants permission in a specific instance.
- **Security and other court personnel are not liable for any damage, misplacement, or loss to electronic devices confiscated or collected under the Rule or a court order.**

Any individual who willfully violates Maryland Rule 16-208 or any reasonable limitation imposed by the local administrative judge or the presiding judge may be found in contempt of court and may be subject to sanctions in accordance with the Rules in Title 15, Chapter 200.

For more details, see Maryland Rule 16-208.