

VIRGINIA:

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT,
GENERAL DISTRICT COURT, AND
JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT
OF LOUDOUN COUNTY**

**IN RE: ALL PERSONS AND ITEMS ENTERING THE COURT
COMPLEX INCLUDING THE COURTROOMS, CLERK'S OFFICES,
JUVENILE COURT SERVICES UNIT AND ALL PUBLIC AREAS OF
THE COURT COMPLEX**

ORDER

It appearing that certain rules and procedures should be implemented for the orderly, safe and efficient dispatch of business and for proper decorum before all of the Courts of Loudoun County, all Clerk's Offices, the Juvenile Court Services Unit, all offices located within the courthouse, and all public areas of the courthouse, it is therefore, **ORDERED** as follows:

1. Courthouse and Court Buildings.

References to "courthouse" or "court complex" as used herein shall include the Loudoun County Historic Courthouse, the Loudoun County Courthouse, and the Loudoun County General District Courthouse collectively.

"Loudoun County Historic Courthouse" as used herein refers to the historic building at the corner of King & Market streets with a main entrance that faces King Street.

"Loudoun County Courthouse" as used herein refers to the building with a main entrance that faces East Market Street.

"Loudoun County General District Courthouse" as used herein refers to the building with a main entrance that faces Church Street.

2. Prohibited Items and Substances.

No explosive devices or materials, illegal substances, alcohol, marijuana, defensive or offensive weapons (including but not limited to those items listed in Va. Code § 18.2-308), ammunition, potentially dangerous objects or objects prohibited by this order shall be brought into the courthouse, including the

courtrooms, the clerk's offices, the juvenile court services unit, any offices located within the courthouse, or any public areas thereof. Any such object is subject to seizure and forfeiture. Court security officers on duty and sworn law enforcement officers in uniform or prominently displaying a badge of authority are exempted from this prohibition with respect to items required of such officers in the discharge of their duties. Court security officers on duty and sworn law enforcement officers in uniform may carry their officially issued weapons into the courthouse. Sworn law enforcement officers allowed to carry weapons as part of their employment, but not in uniform, shall deposit such weapons in a secure area designated by the Sheriff immediately upon entering the courthouse.

3. **Search and Seizure/Forfeiture.**

Upon entering the courthouse, all persons except court security officers on duty and sworn law enforcement officers in uniform shall submit to either an electronic search or physical "pat down", or both, of his or her person at the request of any court security officer. All persons also shall exhibit to such officers any electronic devices of any description, the contents of any parcel, handbag, carrying case, or container of whatever nature and shall be subject to an electronic and physical search at the request of any court security officer. After entry and any initial search described above, if there develops a reasonable articulable suspicion that an item not permitted in the courthouse is in the possession of an individual or contained in any parcel or any other container, such person or parcel or container also shall be subject to the above-described search while in any area of the courthouse. All items not permitted by this order shall be subject to seizure and forfeiture. The Chief Judge of the Circuit Court may exempt specific staff entering prior to the normal opening of the courthouse from the requirements of this paragraph.

4. **Market Street Entrance and King Street Entrance to Loudoun County Courthouse.**

The Market Street Entrance to the Loudoun County Courthouse shall be open

for use by the public during posted working hours. The King Street entrance to the Loudoun County Courthouse shall be open for use only by court complex employees, sworn law enforcement officers, jurors, attorneys, adult probation officers, juvenile pretrial probation officers and community corrections probation officers during posted working hours.

5. **Church Street Entrance to Loudoun General District Courthouse.**

The Church Street Entrance to the Loudoun General District Courthouse shall be available for use by members of the public during posted working hours.

The Church Street Entrance to the Loudoun General District Courthouse shall be available for use by court complex employees or other employees with offices located within the building during posted working hours and for use during expanded hours established by Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, Court Security division.

6. **Tobacco and Smoke Free Building.**

Smoking, the use of tobacco or tobacco products and the use of e-cigarettes is prohibited in all areas of the courthouse.

7. **Food and Beverages.**

Food and beverages may not be consumed in any public areas except immediately adjacent to the canteen and vending machine areas. Water may be consumed in the courthouse but may only be brought into a courtroom as provided in paragraph 12.

8. **Animals.**

No animals, except *bonafide*, credentialed service animals (i.e., not "emotional support" animals), and canine dogs accompanied by their assigned deputy, that are on the premises in the investigation or detection of criminal activity, shall be admitted into the courthouse absent written permission from the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court.

9. **Photography, Cameras, Audio or Video Recordings, etc.**

Unless specifically authorized by a presiding judge in a specific case, or as provided in this paragraph regarding court reporters, or as provided in paragraph 10 of this order with respect to personal electronic devices, no cameras, audio recording devices or video recording devices or any device capable of recording, photography or video recording or the electronic transmission of voice or image shall be allowed in the courthouse. No photography, audio recording, video recording, or playing of music or use of headphones/earbuds shall be allowed anywhere in the public areas of the courthouse. Court reporters for cases pending in the courts shall be permitted to bring audio recording devices into the courthouse and use these devices as well as headphones/earbuds while serving as a court reporter for an assigned case.

10. **Cell Phones, Smart Watches, Pagers, Tablets, etc. in Public Areas.**

- a. Personal electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, smart watches, pagers, tablets, etc.) or any similar devices that are capable of photography, video, audio recording or electronic transmission of voice or images may be brought into the courthouse (limited to one type of each device absent permission from a presiding judge) by only the following individuals following an inspection, electronic or otherwise, by a court security officer:
- i. Active members of the Virginia State Bar (VSB) who display a valid VSB card;
 - ii. Active members of a state bar appearing before a court in a case scheduled to be heard that day *pro hac vice* when accompanied by an active member of the Virginia State Bar;
 - iii. Sworn law enforcement officers; staff of the Circuit Court;
 - iv. Clerks and members of the staff of the Clerks of the

Circuit Court; General District Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court including the Court Services Unit;

- v. Juvenile Probation Officers; Adult Probation Officers; Community Corrections Program Pretrial and Probation Officers;
- vi. Court reporters for cases pending in the Courts; language interpreters for cases pending in the Courts;
- vii. Victim-Witness Program employees for cases pending in the Courts;
- viii. Mediators for cases pending in the Courts; county maintenance employees assigned to the courthouse; and
- ix. Attorney support staff specifically authorized by a presiding judge.

Only devices that are the property of the individuals authorized under this order (or their employer when such device is assigned to their use by their employer) may be brought into the courthouse by such individuals. An authorized individual may not bring devices of others into the courthouse. The above items may be used only by individuals authorized in this paragraph to possess such items in the public areas of the courthouse, or in an employee's assigned private work area, and should be used discreetly in order to respect the rights of others. Upon entering a courtroom all such devices shall be silenced and not used for any purpose except as provided in paragraph 11 or unless authorized by a presiding judge.

- b.** Personal electronic devices that are not capable of photography, video recording, audio recording, or electronic transmission of images are allowed in the courthouse following inspection, electronic or otherwise, by a court security officer. These devices may be used in the public areas (excluding courtrooms) of the courthouse and should be used discreetly to respect the rights of others. Before entering a courtroom all such

devices shall be silenced and not used for any purpose except as provided in paragraph 11 or unless authorized by a presiding judge.

11. **Personal Electronic Devices in the Courtroom.**

- a. **Requirements before entering a courtroom and permitted uses.** All personal electronic devices shall be silenced prior to entering the courtroom. These devices shall be silenced in such a manner that no calls, messages, alerts, or audible sound is capable of being emitted. Sworn court reporters designated to a case may record the proceedings to create an accurate record of the proceedings. Except as provided above, unless specifically authorized by a presiding judge, no device may be used as a telephone, for entertainment, for reading, texting, emails, social media, or any form of communication, photography, audio recording, or video recording in the courtroom.
- b. **Permitted uses when a case is called for a hearing.** Once a specific case is called for a hearing, the attorneys appearing in that case (and their support staff if authorized by the presiding judge for the specific case) shall be allowed to use their personal electronic devices solely for access to legal research, their professional calendars, for scheduling, as calculators, and for access to case related files while the case is before the court for hearing. Such devices shall be silenced in such a manner that no calls, messages, alerts, or audible sound is capable of being emitted.

12. **Decorum in the Courtroom.**

All persons entering the courtroom should remove hats and sunglasses before entering. All persons should be seated after entering the courtroom when court is in session. No food, food items, or drinks are allowed in the courtrooms.

Attorneys, parties, and witnesses scheduled to testify may bring commercially bottled water (not carbonated or flavored) in the original non-glass container into the courtroom; however, they may only be consumed by

attorneys and parties only during such time when their case is being heard by the court. A witness may only consume water when testifying.

No gum chewing is allowed in the courtroom. All gum should be properly disposed of prior to entering the courtroom.

The presiding judge in each courtroom has authority over matters of decorum and safety in the courtroom in which he or she is presiding.

13. Attire.

All persons should be properly attired before any courtroom at the discretion of the presiding judge.

14. Failure to Comply.

Failure to comply with the provisions of this order may result in the loss of privileges, seizure, and forfeiture of devices and/or contempt.

15. Copies to be Posted.

Copies of this Order shall be posted at the entrances of the courthouse, the areas outside each of the courtrooms, the clerk's offices, public areas, food and vending areas, and the entrances to the juvenile court services unit.

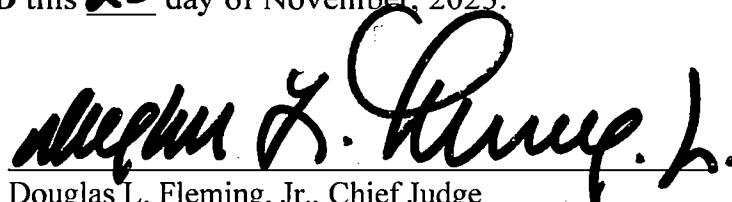
16. Prior Orders.

This Order supersedes the prior orders of the court with respect to such matters.

17. Effective Date.

This Order is effective immediately.

ENTERED this 28TH day of November, 2023.



Douglas L. Fleming, Jr., Chief Judge
20th Judicial Circuit