

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY**

**IN RE: COURTHOUSE SECURITY AND LIMITATIONS  
ON THE USE OF PORTABLE COMMUNICATION  
DEVICES IN THE COURTHOUSES OF THE  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY**

**GENERAL ORDER  
NO. 25-10**

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**INTRODUCTION**

This Order establishes the security procedures applicable to all persons entering the United States Courthouses (referred to hereafter as the “Courthouse” or “Courthouses”) in the Western District of Kentucky. It additionally enumerates items that are prohibited within the Courthouses and establishes limitations on the use of cameras, recording equipment, and Portable Communication Devices, as that term is defined herein. This Order Supersedes General Order 2018-09

**SECURITY PROCEDURES AND PROHIBITED ITEMS**

**Screening of Persons Entering the Courthouses**

1. The United States Marshals Service Court Security Officers shall operate an x-ray machine and a walkthrough magnetometer at the public entrances on the first floor of each Courthouse for the purpose of screening persons entering those buildings. All persons and their belongings are subject to search by the United States Marshals Service while in these Courthouses. All persons entering a Courthouse may be requested to provide identification and to state the nature of their business in the Courthouse.

2. All persons (except those indicated in paragraph number 4 listed below) having business with the Court or any other offices in these Courthouses shall pass through the walkthrough magnetometer for the purpose of detection of firearms, explosives, pepper spray, incendiary devices, knives, or any other item prohibited by law, regulation, or court order from introduction into these Courthouses. These persons shall submit to further screening by a United States Marshals Service Court Security Officer if the readings of the magnetometer indicate the presence of metallic objects. This further screening may encompass the removal of all metallic objects on their person, screening by a portable hand-held metal detector, or other screening procedures as necessary. Any person refusing to submit to this screening process shall be denied access to these Courthouses.

3. All persons (except those indicated in paragraph number 4 below) having business with the Court or any other offices in these Courthouses who are carrying, delivering or otherwise transporting any briefcase, suitcase, package, electronic device (including cell phones, pagers, electronic organizers and portable computers), or any other container (hereinafter referred to as "Carried Item") shall surrender such Carried Item for screening through an x-ray device and/or personal inspection by a Court Security Officer. Any person refusing to submit the Carried Item for screening through an x-ray device and/or personal inspection by a Court Security Officer shall be denied access to these Courthouses. If a Court Security Officer concludes, after x-ray and/or

personal inspection, that any item which the person seeks to bring into these Courthouses contains firearms, explosives, pepper spray, incendiary devices, knives of any length, or any other dangerous item prohibited by law, regulation, or court order, or that is deemed by the Court Security Officer to pose a threat to the safety and welfare of a Courthouse and its occupants, the individual may be subject to arrest.

4. Unless otherwise authorized by a United States District Court Judge, the following persons are exempt from the screening procedures set forth above upon the presentment of the appropriate official identification:

- a. Judges of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit;
- b. Judges of the United States District and Bankruptcy Courts for the Western District of Kentucky;
- c. United States Magistrate Judges for the Western District of Kentucky;
- d. Other judges of the United States Courts who are serving by designation or assignment in these Courthouses;
- e. Administrative Law Judges employed by the Social Security Administration or Executive Office of Immigration Review.
- f. Deputies of the United States Marshals Service, contract guards on duty, and employees of contractors of the United States Marshals Service who serve as Court Security Officers and who are authorized by law and agency regulations to carry firearms;
- g. Probation Officers who are employed by the United States Probation Office and who are authorized by law and agency regulations to carry firearms;
- h. Employees of the United States Federal Protective Service of the Department of Homeland Security and their contract private security officers who are authorized by law and agency regulations to carry firearms;
- i. The United States Attorney and Assistant United States Attorneys of the Western District of Kentucky, upon showing of official government credentials;
- j. Federal law enforcement officers whose permanent or assigned place of duty is located within a Courthouse and who are authorized by law and agency regulations to make arrests and carry firearms in the performance of their official duties may be armed in these Courthouses;
- k. Agents, officers, and inspectors of all federal law enforcement agencies who are authorized by law and agency regulations to make arrests and carry firearms in the performance of their official duties while transporting a defendant/prisoner for an initial appearance before a Magistrate Judge and/or an authorized purpose in the United States Attorney's satellite office; and

1. State and Local Law Enforcement Officers, while in uniform and when investigating/responding to a reported crime or other emergency situation in a Courthouse.

5. No person having authorized access to security areas after having passed through the screening devices or having authorized access via key, card key or other device, shall permit any person access to these Courthouses or to any elevator, locked stairwell door, or any other locked door in these Courthouses without proper written authorization from the employee's appropriate agency manager.

6. Only government employees and contract employees authorized by their appropriate agency manager and possessing an authorized card key may enter these Courthouses through any locked entrance.

Any person refusing to cooperate with these security measures may be denied entrance to a Courthouse.

### **Possession of Firearms or Other Dangerous Weapons**

It is unlawful to possess firearms, and other dangerous weapons, including but not limited to, explosives, pepper spray, incendiary devices, and knives in any federal building, including the Courthouses, with or without the intent to commit a crime (Title 18 U.S.C. § 930(a)(b)). Except as specifically provided herein, or directed by the Court, no person shall possess a weapon in these Courthouses. Any person attempting to bring either firearms or other dangerous weapons into a Courthouse will have those items confiscated by the United States Marshals Service, in addition to being denied entry to the Courthouse and, potentially, subjected to arrest.

1. Employees of the United States Marshals Service, including Court Security Officers, who are authorized by law and agency regulations to carry firearms, may possess firearms within the Courthouses.

2. Employees of the United States Probation Office, who are authorized by law and agency regulations to carry firearms in the performance of their official duties, may possess firearms in these Courthouses to the extent necessary to transport such firearms by the most direct route available to and from the offices of the Probation Department. In accordance with regulations of the Probation Department, all firearms shall be secured while present in the Courthouses and within the offices of the Probation Department. The Chief Probation Officer will notify the United States Marshals Service, in writing, of the names of the officers with the authorization to carry firearms.

3. United States Federal Protective Service Offices and their contract security officers of the Department of Homeland Security, who are authorized by law and agency regulations to carry firearms in the performance of their official duties, may possess firearms in the Courthouses.

4. Agents, officers, and inspectors of all federal law enforcement agencies who are authorized by law and agency regulations to make arrests and carry firearms in the performance of their official duties may be armed in these Courthouses only while transporting a defendant/prisoner for an initial appearance before a Magistrate Judge and/or

an authorized purpose in the United States Attorney's satellite office. In such circumstances, a call prior to arrival at a Courthouse must be placed by the agent, inspector, or representative of same to the United States Marshals Service advising that an armed agency or inspector of that agency will be transporting a prisoner into a Courthouse. Additional internal policy, developed by the United States Marshals Service, will be required (such as lapel pins, entry log signature, etc.).

5. Federal law enforcement officers whose permanent or assigned place of duty is located within a Courthouse and who are authorized by law and agency regulations to make arrests and carry firearms in the performance of their official duties may be armed in these Courthouses

6. State and Local Law Enforcement Officers, while in uniform, may enter and retain their weapons while investigating/responding to a reported crime within a Courthouse, or when responding to an emergency situation when authorized by the United States Marshal or her or his designee.

### **Food and Beverages**

Unless otherwise permitted by the presiding judge, no member of the public will be permitted to bring food, beverages, or chewing gum into any courtroom, with the following exceptions:

1. Formula, breast milk, and baby food for infants in an amount of 8 ounces or less; and
2. Medically necessary liquids in an amount of 3.4 ounces or less.

These provisions do not apply to attorneys, jurors, witnesses, or employees of the Court or U.S. Marshals Service.

### **Electronic Smoking Devices**

The use of electronic smoking devices, including “vaporizers”, “vapes” and “E-Cigarettes”, is not permitted in the interior spaces of all federal facilities. Accordingly, such devices are not permitted in the Courthouses.

### **USE OF PORTABLE COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

"Portable Communication Devices" include, but are not limited to, cellular phones, smart phones, laptop computers, tablet computers, devices that wirelessly connect to and pair with computers and smartphones to transmit data (including smart watches, earpieces, headphones, and fitness trackers) audio recorders, still cameras and video cameras as well as all other similar portable computing devices. The possession and use of these devices in the Courthouses is subject to the provisions set forth below. Nothing in this Order shall be deemed to prevent a tenant agency from establishing additional rules governing the use of Portable Communication Devices in their leased space.

## **Courthouse Use**

The guidelines for Portable Communication Devices brought into Courthouses in the Western District vary between each divisional Courthouse as noted below, however, no standalone cameras or recording devices are permitted in any Courthouse, and no photography or video of the interior of the Courthouses is permitted, except as otherwise noted below:

- a. Louisville Courthouse. Employees and members of the general public, including visitors, vendors, attorneys and anyone having business in the Courthouse, are permitted to bring Portable Communication Devices through security screening and into the Courthouse.
- b. Bowling Green, Owensboro, and Paducah Courthouses. No one other than employees, officers of the court engaged in the conduct of court business, and law enforcement personnel shall bring any Portable Communication Device through security screening and into the Courthouse.
- d. Fort Campbell. No one other than employees, officers of the court engaged in the conduct of court business, and law enforcement personnel shall bring any Portable Communication Device through security screening and into the Courthouse.
- e. Fort Knox. Portable Communication Devices are allowed in the Courthouse and courtrooms of Ft. Knox during magistrate judge proceedings but must remain in the "off" position while in or near the courtrooms unless previously approved by the presiding magistrate judge.

## **Courtroom Use**

No one other than court employees, officers of the court engaged in the conduct of court business, and law enforcement personnel shall bring any Portable Communication Device into courtrooms, witness rooms, jury rooms, chambers or associated space except with the permission of the presiding judicial officer. All persons authorized to possess their devices in these spaces must place such devices in silent mode during all in-court proceedings.

## **Recording and Broadcasting of Court Proceedings**

1. In the context of criminal court proceedings, Fed. R. Crim. P. 53 prohibits the taking of photographs and the broadcasting of criminal case judicial proceedings from the courtroom. Audio and audio-visual equipment may be utilized only for the limited purpose of presentation of the evidence, perpetuation of the record of the proceedings, and security.

2. Judicial Conference Policy<sup>1</sup> provides that a judge presiding over a civil or bankruptcy non-trial proceeding may, in the judge's discretion, authorize live remote public audio access to any portion of that proceeding in which a witness is not testifying. This policy does not create any right of any party or the public to live remote public audio access to any proceeding.

3. At the discretion of the presiding judge, in certain cases where the use of an overflow courtroom is necessary for spectators and the media, the Court may permit the use of closed-circuit television linking the courtroom with another location. Such overflow courtrooms are subject to the same restrictions regarding the use of mobile computing equipment and cell phones as any other courtroom, unless otherwise ordered by the presiding judge.

4. The Court may broadcast proceedings to a holding cell via closed-circuit technology in instances where a disruptive defendant has been detained.

5. No person may record any court proceeding unless otherwise authorized by the presiding judge. Transcripts of court proceedings may be requested in the manner indicated on the Court's website.

6. The Court will allow the use of cameras and other equipment during ceremonial proceedings, including naturalization proceedings, mock trials, or a judge's investiture. Permission to bring this equipment into the Courthouse for these proceedings can be arranged through the Clerk of Court.

### **Recording and Photography in Non-Courtroom Areas of the Courthouses**

1. The General Services Administration's Property Manager or his/her designee can authorize an individual or contract group to possess a camera or recording device for the purpose of maintaining or enhancing a Courthouse, to include repair and alterations. The permitting authority shall notify, in writing, the United States Marshals Service of such authorization.

2. Tenant Managers or their designees are required to obtain permission and authorization from the United States Marshals Service to permit, for a specific occurrence, authorization for a person or group to possess and carry cameras and/or recording instructions into these Courthouses.


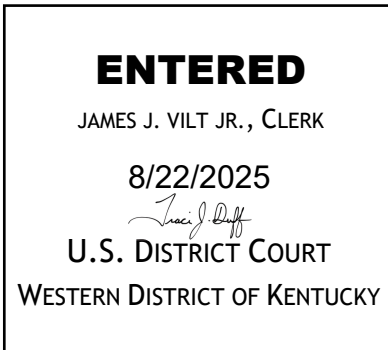
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<sup>1</sup> Judicial Conference Policy provides that court proceedings may not be broadcast, televised, recorded, or photographed for the purpose of public dissemination. However, a judge may permit remote public audio access to some civil and bankruptcy proceedings (See the *Guide to Judiciary Policies and Procedure*, Vol.10, Ch.4, Section 410.and [JCUS-SEP 2023](#), p. 10.)

## VIOLATIONS

Any person violating this Order is subject to arrest and may be charged with any applicable criminal offense and/or contempt of Court. Property brought into the Courthouses or used in violation of this Order is subject to confiscation and forfeiture upon court order.

**DATED:** August 22, 2025



Greg N. Stivers, Chief Judge  
United States District Court