

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
FULTON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2022-1

POLICY ON PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES

WHEREAS, the Illinois Supreme Court has adopted a Policy on Portable Electronic Devices (PEDs) effective January, 2022, and

WHEREAS, said Policy defines PEDs to include personal computers, tablet computers, mobile phones, electronic calendars, e-book readers, smart watches and similar devices, and

WHEREAS, the Illinois Supreme Court recognizes that many courthouses have current policies which ban PEDs except for lawyers, jurors and other employees who need them and that this privilege should be extended to others including self-represented litigants and court visitors, and

WHEREAS, the Policy respects the interest and needs of people who enter the courtroom while recognizing and serving the needs to maintain order and safety, and

WHEREAS, the Policy sets forth a guide in establishing local policies for the permitting the use of Portable Electronic Devices in order to achieve equitable access to justice across the State of Illinois while providing security and safety and order for all, and

WHEREAS, the Fulton County Courthouse is a multi use facility under the supervision and control of the Courts of the Ninth Judicial Circuit for courtroom facilities and the Sheriff of Fulton County for all other facilities which include the offices of the County Board, State's Attorney, Public Defender, County Clerk and Recorder, County Assessor, County Treasurer, and the Sheriff, and

WHEREAS the Sheriff of Fulton County controls the access to the courthouse in order to protect and keep safe the public using the courthouse facilities and the county employees working in the courthouse facilities, and

WHEREAS the current policy of the Sheriff restricts the use of PEDs within the courthouse facilities by the public unless required for the purposes set out in the Illinois Supreme Court Policy On Portable Electronic Devices as directed by the Court or allowed or requested by the elected/appointed county officers who have offices within the courthouse facility, and

WHEREAS the Sheriff provides for secure and supervised storage of PEDs without charge and has trained employees who screen access to the courthouse, and

WHEREAS the current policies for the use of PEDs within the courthouse facilities have not impeded access to justice for those using the courts including self-represented litigants and court visitors while providing security, safety and order,

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. Case participants including lawyers, parties (including self-represented litigants), and witnesses may use PEDs inside a courtroom or in the office of the Circuit Clerk to check calendars, present case-related information, file pleadings or obtain information. All PEDs must remain in "silent" mode at all times in courtrooms. All other use of PEDs is prohibited and the PEDs shall be held in the secure and supervised storage provided by the Sheriff at the entrance to the courthouse facility.

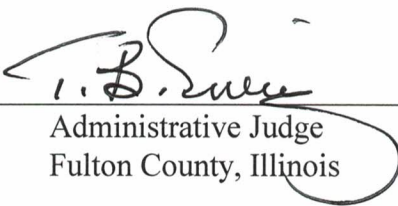
2. At no time shall any case participant or witness, who is allowed use of a PED in a courtroom, use the PED to take photographs, audio or video recordings within a courtroom or the courthouse facility without express approval of a judge or as provided by Illinois Supreme Court Rule 44.

3. Signage reflecting the availability of this order at the office of the Circuit Clerk shall be posted at the entrance of the Fulton County Courthouse, at the door of each of the three courtrooms and at the office of the Circuit Clerk. Copies of the order shall also be available at the entrance of the Fulton County Courthouse.

4. Anyone violating this Administrative Order may be found in Contempt of Court or subject to other penalties under the law.

5. This Order is effective upon entry.

Dated: February 24, 2022



Administrative Judge
Fulton County, Illinois