

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
IN THE GENERAL DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
IN THE JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

**ORDER REGARDING PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES,
COURTHOUSE SCREENING, AND PROHIBITED ITEMS**

It is hereby ORDERED, pursuant to § 8.01-4, § 16.1-69.35:4 and § 17.1-128.2 of the Code of Virginia, that the following policies are adopted in the Circuit, General District, and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts for the City of Alexandria, effective July 1, 2026:

I. COURTHOUSE SCREENING AND PROHIBITED ITEMS

- A. SCREENING PROCEDURES: To promote the safety and security of the Alexandria Courthouse, visitors to the court will be screened, at the direction of the Alexandria Sheriff's Office, for weapons, contraband, and prohibited items.
- B. PROHIBITED ITEMS: The following items are prohibited in the Alexandria Courthouse:
- 1) Firearms
 - 2) Knives/Razors/Sharp Objects
 - 3) Stun Weapons
 - 4) Pepper Spray/Mace
 - 5) Cameras/Video Cameras/Smart Glasses/Recording Equipment or Devices (not otherwise a component of a portable electronic device)
 - 6) Smoking/Vape Materials
 - 7) Matches/Lighters
 - 8) Flammable Liquids/Substances
 - 9) Any other item that may pose a risk to the safety and security of the courthouse.

II. POSSESSION AND USE OF PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Visitors to the court may possess portable electronic devices in both the courthouse and the courtrooms subject to the following limitations:

- A. SECURITY SCREENING: Visitors to the court shall submit to security screening of the portable electronic device upon entrance to the courthouse at the direction of the Alexandria Sheriff's Office.
- B. USE IN COMMON AREAS: Use of portable electronic devices shall be limited to the lobbies, hallways, and other common areas of the courthouse. Portable electronic devices shall remain on silent mode at all times.

- C. RECORDING, PHOTOGRAPHING, AND LIVESTREAMING: Any use of a portable electronic device in the courthouse or courtrooms to take photographs, make audio or video recordings, or transmit live audio or video streaming is prohibited except with prior written authorization by a presiding judge.
- D. USE IN COURTROOMS: Use of any portable electronic device in any courtroom is prohibited except with the express permission of the presiding judge, and only for the purposes and in the manner expressly authorized by the presiding judge.
- E. FURTHER LIMITATIONS: The Alexandria Sheriff's Office or a presiding judge may impose further limitations on the use or possession of any portable electronic device as necessary to maintain safety, security, proper behavior, order, and the administration of justice. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit the authority of the court pursuant to Virginia Code §19.2-266 to exclude persons from criminal trials and regulate media coverage of judicial proceedings. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to permit any courthouse personnel to search or access any data on the portable electronic device of a visitor to the court, including during a security screening as described in section II(A).
- F. VIOLATIONS: Any portable electronic device used in violation of this order, the lawful directive of the Alexandria Sheriff's Office, or the lawful directive of a presiding judge, shall be subject to confiscation by the court or by the Alexandria Sheriff's Office. The court and the Alexandria Sheriff's Office shall not be liable for any damage to or loss of any confiscated portable electronic device. Any visitor to the court who uses a portable electronic device in violation of this order, the lawful directive of the Alexandria Sheriff's Office, or the lawful directive of a presiding judge may be removed from the courthouse, and may also be charged with contempt of court, which upon conviction, is punishable by fine and/or imprisonment, or other action as may be authorized by law.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Portable electronic device" means (i) a personal laptop; (ii) a tablet; (iii) a mobile telephone, including a cell phone and any telephone with a camera, audio and video recording capabilities, and transmission capabilities; (iv) an electronic calendar; (v) an electronic book reader; (vi) a smart watch; or (vii) any other electronic personal communication device. "Portable electronic device" does not include a camera, a video camera, smart glasses, video or audio recording equipment, or a recording device that is not otherwise a component of a portable electronic device.
- B. "Visitor to the court" means a member of the public who is not an active or retired judge, a magistrate, an attorney-at-law who possesses and presents a valid state bar identification card, a law-enforcement officer as defined in § 9.1-101 or court security officer, a probation officer who possesses and presents proper credentials and who is at the courthouse in the conduct of his official duties, a state or local agency employee who possesses and presents proper credentials and who is at the courthouse in the conduct of his official duties, a court reporter during the course of his official duties within the courthouse, and any other individual who has been authorized to possess a portable electronic device in the court upon a determination by the Alexandria Sheriff's Office that such individual's possession of a portable electronic device does not pose a security risk or threat and that access to such portable electronic device is necessary for conducting such individual's work or business in the court.

- C. "Presiding judge" means a judge of the Alexandria Circuit Court, the Alexandria General District Court, or the Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.
- D. "Alexandria Sheriff's Office" means the Sheriff for the City of Alexandria, and his individual Deputy Sheriffs engaged in the performance of their lawful duties.

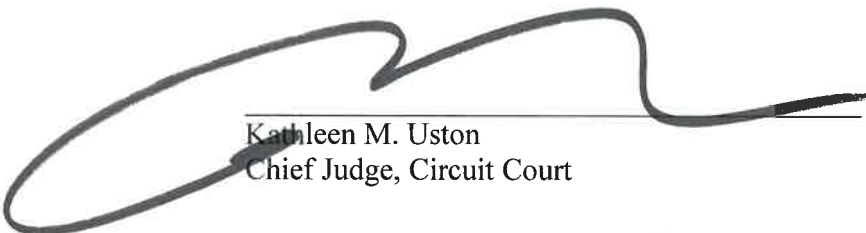
and it is,

FURTHER ORDERED, that the forgoing policies shall be posted in an accessible, prominent, and conspicuous manner at the entrance of each court, on each court's page on the Virginia Judicial System website, and on each court's individual website; and it is

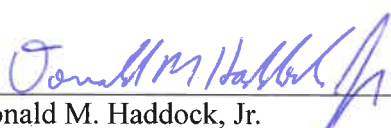
FURTHER ORDERED that the Alexandria Sheriff's Office may make and post such signage in and around the courthouse as may be deemed necessary to facilitate compliance with these policies; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED that this Order shall supersede and replace: (i) the September 18, 2017, Order of the Circuit, General District, and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts; and (ii) the February 28, 2025, and March 11, 2026, Orders of the Circuit Court.

Entered this 22^d day of June, 2026.



Kathleen M. Uston
Chief Judge, Circuit Court



Donald M. Haddock, Jr.
Chief Judge, General District Court



Sean A. Sherlock
Chief Judge, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court