



Supreme Court
Rhode Island Judiciary
Policy Regarding Entry to Judicial Facilities and
Courthouse Rules
Revised March 13, 2026

I. Authority

Pursuant to G.L. 1956 §§ 8-15-4(b), (c), (d), and (e), the State Court Administrator, under the direction of the Chief Justice, is vested with the duty to “perform all other necessary functions relating to the administration of the courts,” “to act upon all administrative matters affecting the operation of the judiciary,” is “authorized and empowered to adopt any rules and regulations necessary” and “to assume control of and supervise the maintenance and repair of all buildings housing the supreme and several inferior courts of justice throughout the State of Rhode Island.” The responsibility for carrying out the terms of this Policy and Rules, under the direction of the State Court Administrator, is vested in the Judicial Security Personnel, as defined herein.

II. Purpose

The Judiciary is charged by the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island with the duty to administer justice in a fair, orderly, and impartial manner, which includes maintaining a healthful, safe, and secure environment for all who utilize Judiciary facilities and to ensure that the administration of justice occurs without disruption, influence, impediment, or interference. To this end, the Judiciary requires all individuals entering a Courthouse or Judicial Facility to adhere to the following safety and security measures.

III. Definitions

- A. Capitol Police. Executive branch public safety agency responsible for providing entry screening at all state courthouse facilities.
- B. Courthouse. Any Courthouse within the State of Rhode Island that is under the operation and control of the Judiciary: Frank J. Licht Judicial Complex (250 Benefit Street, Providence), J. Joseph Garrahy Judicial Complex (1 Dorrance Plaza, Providence), Philip W. Noel Judicial Complex (222 Quaker Lane, Warwick), Florence K. Murray Judicial Complex (45 Washington Square, Newport), J. Howard McGrath Judicial Complex (4800 Tower Hill Road, Wakefield), and the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal (670 New London Turnpike, Cranston).
- C. Division of Sheriffs. Executive branch public safety agency responsible for providing security within every Courthouse, overseeing prisoner transportation, and prisoner movement to, from, and within every Courthouse.

- D. Identification Card. A card issued by the Supreme Court authorizing an approved court user or employee to bypass security screening by scanning the identification card at the entrance of a judicial facility, subject to agreement to abide by terms of use. *See* Attachment A hereto.
- E. Judiciary. The unified judicial system as set forth in G.L. 1956 § 8-15-1.
- F. Judicial Facility. Includes every Courthouse, as well as the Judicial Records Center (5 Hill Street, Pawtucket) and the John E. Fogarty Judicial Annex (24 Weybosset Street, Providence).
- G. Electronic Device. Includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, tablets, personal computers, personal digital assistants, cameras, audio equipment, and/or similar devices. (See Executive Order 2019-04).

IV. Entry Protocols

- A. Security Screening. The main entrance to each Courthouse consists of at least one (1) magnetometer (metal detector) and one x-ray machine for each entrance. Capitol Police Officers are assigned to each entrance and are responsible for screening all entrants.

Individuals who refuse to submit to security screening shall not be allowed to enter the Courthouse.

All visitors entering a Courthouse shall be processed through the metal detectors as follows:

1. Place any bags or personal belongings on the x-ray belt or in the container provided for scanning, including, but not limited to purses, watches, jewelry, backpacks, telephones, and pocket contents;
2. Place overcoats or jackets on the belt of the x-ray machine;
3. Walk through the metal detector, as directed by the Capitol Police;
4. If the metal detector sets off an alert or alarm, a Capitol Police Officer may perform another scan using a hand-held wand. The Capitol Police Officer may also conduct a physical search of personal articles to determine the cause of the alert or alarm;
5. Weapons and/or prohibited items (*see* Section G below) identified shall not be allowed into the building;
6. The Capitol Police will not hold any personal property that is not permitted in the Courthouse including, but not limited to, electronic recorders, cameras, weapons, knitting needles, or any other prohibited item.

B. Identification Card.

1. All judicial officers, court staff, attorneys, and/or approved vendors in possession of an Identification Card shall be required to present the Identification Card when entering a Judicial Facility. Each entrant will scan the Identification Card at the entrance to the Judicial Facility to identify the entrant as an authorized person permitted to bypass the metal detectors. Any individual failing to provide and scan the Identification Card for the Capitol Police Officer(s) on duty must undergo the standard screening process.
2. Authorized employees of cleaning contractors shall be required to wear an Identification Card when entering a Judicial Facility on behalf of the cleaning contractor. Each individual will scan an Identification Card at the entrance to the Judicial Facility each and every time the individual enters the building and shall sign the vendor log located next to the Capitol Police Officer(s). In addition, each individual must be processed through the metal detectors and place any bags or personal belongings in the individual's possession through the x-ray machines for inspection by the Capitol Police Officer(s) at that station each and every time the individual enters the Judicial Facility.

C. Face and Head Coverings. Individuals entering a Courthouse are required to remove headwear and face and/or head coverings (such as hoods). Facial coverings and/or head coverings, such as masks, scarves, gaiters, bandanas, hoods, or headwear, etc. are to be removed upon entry for security purposes and shall not be worn inside a Courthouse subject to the following exceptions:

1. Head coverings worn for religious reasons are an exception to this prohibition; such exceptions should be requested by the court user to the Capitol Police; and
2. Medical grade surgical masks may be worn for health reasons while inside a Courthouse; no cloth masks or gaiters may be worn for this purpose.

D. Law Enforcement. Law enforcement officers entering the Courthouse on official business may bypass the metal detectors but must sign the designated logbook at each Courthouse security entrance. All law enforcement officers must indicate the date, name, name of law enforcement agency, badge number, the purpose of the visit, entry time, and departure time. Law enforcement officers are required to secure any service weapons upon entering a Courthouse, in accordance with Executive Order 2015-07.

E. Liquids or Beverages. No liquids or beverages may be brought into any Judicial Facility. Visitors attempting to enter with prohibited items will be asked to dispose of the items in the trash receptacles located outside the Judicial Facility, regardless of whether the liquid or beverage is sealed or open subject to the following exceptions:

1. Judicial officers, court staff, other Judicial Facility tenants, and attorneys who display an Identification Card are exempt from this prohibition. Any individual failing to provide and scan the Identification Card for the Capitol Police Officer(s) on duty must

pass through the metal detectors and will be prohibited from bringing any liquids or beverages into the Judicial Facility; and

2. Jurors who present a jury summons or badge.

Capitol Police Officer(s) are authorized to make exceptions to this section if a liquid is determined to be necessary and required to serve childcare, medical, or other special needs. Visitors should advise the Capitol Police at the screening station if assistance is required.

- F. Service Animals. Service animals specifically trained to aid persons with disabilities are permitted inside a Courthouse but must be leashed or tethered and under the control of the handler at all times.

Individuals entering a Judicial Facility with a service animal will be required to speak with the Capitol Police regarding the need for and training of the service animal. **Note:** Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), emotional support, comfort, or companionship animals do not qualify as service animals and will not be permitted within a Courthouse.

Service animals that are not properly under the handler's control will not be allowed to enter a Judicial Facility, and the Judiciary's ADA Office will be contacted in order to provide a suitable alternate accommodation.

Note: An individual who expressly misrepresents that an animal is a service animal for the purpose of obtaining rights or privileges afforded to persons with disabilities accompanied by service animals or knows or should have known the animal does not meet the definition of a service animal, either for the purpose to gain access to or remain in a public area, is subject to a civil violation pursuant to G.L. 1956 § 40-9.1-3.1.

Questions about service animals may be directed to the Judiciary's ADA Office at ada@courts.ri.gov or (401) 615-2469.

- G. Weapons and Prohibited Items. The following list of items are prohibited and may not be brought into any Judicial Facility:

1. Weapons of any type (see also Executive Order 2015-07);
2. Cutting instruments, including, but not limited to, knives, scissors, or anything with a cutting edge;
3. Sharp objects, including knitting needles;
4. Tools of any type;
5. Aerosol sprays or containers, including mace, pepper spray, hairspray, etc.;

6. Incendiary devices, including cigarette lighters, gas lighters, matches, or any item that emits a flame, etc.;
7. Any other item deemed dangerous or unidentifiable by the Capitol Police;
8. Motorized or non-motorized scooters, unless required for mobility assistance;
9. Photographic or audio-visual equipment of any type, including cameras, video, or audio recorders or players; **NOTE:** An Electronic Device is permissible but shall not be used to take photographs or make audio, video, or any other type of recording in a Judicial Facility (See Executive Order 2019-04); and
10. Signs, placards, posters, or other items meant to interfere with, influence, or disrupt the administration of justice and/or to harass individuals within a Judicial Facility.

V. Courthouse Rules

- A. Electronic Devices: Shall be used in accordance with Executive Order, 2019-04.
- B. Recording Devices: The use of traditional handheld cameras, cellular telephone cameras, or cameras attached to or embedded within any device, including, but not limited to, tablets or glasses (smart glasses, including but not limited to Meta AI glasses), as well as the use of any item to record audio, is strictly prohibited in any Judicial Facility. Cellular telephone use is strictly forbidden in courtrooms.
- C. Proper Dress Required. No shorts, tank tops, hats or other head coverings (see Section IV C above) are allowed in any courtroom.
- D. Food and Beverage. No outside food or beverages are allowed to be brought into a Courthouse. Please see the Capitol Police for requested exceptions.
- E. Face and Head Coverings. Individuals may not wear face or head coverings while in a Courthouse unless required for health or religious reasons. *See* Section IV(C) above.
- F. Signs or Posters. No signage, posters, placards, leaflet, or other materials may be displayed or disseminated inside a Judicial Facility unless prior approval has been sought and granted by the Judiciary's Assistant State Court Administrator for the Facilities, Operations, and Security Office or a designee.
- G. Conduct. All persons entering a Judicial Facility shall behave in an orderly manner and shall refrain from harassing or interfering with jurors, witnesses, judicial officers, judicial personnel, or members of the public.

ATTACHMENT A



Supreme Court

Administrative Office of State Courts Facilities, Operations, and Security

Acceptance and Acknowledgement of Court-issued Identification Card

Name:	Card Number:
Court/Department/Agency:	
Email Address:	

Upon receipt of my Rhode Island Judiciary Identification Card (Identification Card), I hereby acknowledge and agree as follows:

1. The Identification Card received today by me is issued for my exclusive possession and use and will be presented upon my entering a Judicial Facility. I will not present the card to access a Judicial Facility for **personal use**, or any other purpose other than during the course of my official duties and responsibilities. I will not allow any other person to borrow, duplicate, use, or otherwise take possession of the Identification Card, and I understand and agree that the Identification Card does not provide entrance to any other person, including but not limited to, any person who may be entering a Judicial Facility with me such as a witness, client, or member of my staff.

2. I understand, agree, and warrant that I shall abide by the Rhode Island Judiciary Policy Regarding Entry to Judicial Facilities and Courthouse Rules, a copy of which I have received today. In accordance with this Policy, I understand and agree that I shall not carry any weapon into a Judicial Facility and any violation of the weapons policy shall subject me to the imposition of discipline.

3. I agree to immediately notify the Judiciary's Director of Security, both verbally and in writing, in the event that my Identification Card is lost, stolen, misplaced, or damaged (this includes punching a hole in the card, or otherwise damaging or defacing the card rendering the Identification Card unusable or unreadable). Upon issuance of a new or replacement Identification Card, I will pay a reissuance fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) to the Rhode Island Judiciary, payable by check or money order only.

4. I acknowledge and accept that the Judiciary reserves the right to review, cancel, suspend, limit, or modify the terms of my usage of the Identification Card and any access to a Judicial Facility at any time.

5. I agree to return the Identification Card within forty-eight (48) hours to the Judiciary's Director of Security upon the voluntary or involuntary termination or suspension of my license to practice law, or as otherwise directed by the Judiciary's Director of Security.

Signature

Date

Return this completed form to the location below.

**Facilities, Operations, and Security Office
Attention: Director of Security
Licht Judicial Complex
250 Benefit Street, Room 205
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 222-6700**

For Office Use Only:

Card Returned: _____

Status Verified: _____

Fee Charged: _____

Please do not alter the Identification Card in any way, including hole punches.