

Supreme Court

In re: Use of Electronic Devices in :
Courtrooms and Courthouses by Attorneys :

ORDER

In accordance with the authority vested in the Supreme Court pursuant to G.L. 1956 (2012 Reenactment) § 8-1-2, the following rules pertaining to the use of electronic devices by attorneys shall be applied in all of the courtrooms and courthouses within the unified judicial system unless the judicial officer presiding in a courtroom publishes an order setting forth his or her reasons for restricting the carrying or use of electronic devices.

As used in these rules, the term “electronic device” means cell phones, personal computers, personal digital assistants, and other similar devices capable of transmitting, receiving, recording or storing messages, images, sounds, data or other information by electronic means.

1. Attorneys may carry electronic devices in court facilities and courtrooms.
2. Attorneys may use electronic devices for purposes related to the practice of law and matters on the court’s calendar, including, but not limited to, checking their calendars, accessing the court’s electronic filing system, accessing the attorney’s files respecting matters being heard in court, researching facts or law, taking and transmitting notes, and receiving and responding to e-mails and text messages.
3. Attorneys shall at all times use their electronic devices in a manner that is respectful of the decorum and dignity of the courtroom. Any activity that

the judicial officer deems to be disruptive may be prohibited by the judicial officer.

4. Electronic devices may not be used for the taking of photographs or for the recording or transmission of sounds or images in or from courtrooms except as permitted under pertinent rules of procedure, rules of practice or court order, including Article VII of the Supreme Court Rules. If an electronic device is capable of recording or transmitting sounds or images, these functions shall not be activated while the electronic device is in the courtroom unless approval for the recording or transmission of sounds or images has been obtained.
5. Electronic devices shall not be used in a manner that interferes with court proceedings or the work of court personnel. Any electronic device capable of transmitting sounds that would be audible in the courtroom must be set to a silent or vibrate mode. Cell phone calls shall neither be made from nor answered in the courtroom when the court is in session.
6. Any attorney who violates the provisions of this rule or any order of the court regarding the possession or use of electronic devices may be found in contempt of court and sanctioned after notice and an opportunity to be heard.

Entered as an Order of this Court this *16th* day of *June 2016*.

/s/
Suttell, C.J.

