

# The Use and Possession of Electronic Devices in Superior Court Facilities

The following guidelines are subject in all cases to a judge or other judicial authority issuing additional specific orders or guidelines for the use of electronic devices in his or her courtroom or hearing room:

## A person *may* have any of the following electronic devices:

- A cell phone
- A camera phone
- A personal computer with or without video or audio recording capabilities
- A digital or tape audio recorder
- A personal digital assistant (PDA) with or without video or audio recording capabilities
- Any other electronic device that can broadcast, record, or take photographs
- A handheld or portable scanner to reproduce court documents. “Handheld or portable scanner” means a battery operated electronic scanning device that leaves no mark or impression on the document being scanned.
- A portable printer to print documents connected to their device

## A person *may* use a cell phone:

- To make phone calls, send and receive e-mails and/or send and receive text messages only, but not in a courtroom, hearing room, lockup, chambers, or offices

## A person *may* use a handheld or portable scanner:

- To reproduce court documents in a clerk’s office as long as the handheld or portable scanner leaves no mark or impression on the document and does not unreasonably interfere with the operation of the clerk’s office.

## A person *may* use a portable printer:

- To print documents from their device, provided it is not done in a courtroom or hearing room so as not to disrupt proceedings or to cause any distraction.

## A person is *prohibited* from using a cell phone, or any other electronic device to:

- Take pictures, except that a person may use a cell phone or other electronic device to photograph court records in a clerk’s office as long as doing so does not unreasonably interfere with the operation of the clerk’s office.
- Take videos
- Make sound recordings
- Broadcast sound
- Broadcast still or moving images (video)

## *Exceptions with the permission of the judge or other judicial authority:*

- A person may use a personal computer for note-taking in a courtroom or hearing room.
- A person who is a participant in a hearing or trial may use a personal computer or other electronic device in a courtroom or hearing room.
- Other electronic devices may be used in a courtroom if permitted by the judge or other judicial authority or permitted by court rules.

## For members of the media:

- Members of the media, as defined in Section 1-10A of the Practice Book, may broadcast, televise, record and photograph court proceedings and trials if permitted by court rules and approved by the judicial authority.
- Other than the broadcasting, televising, recording and photographing of court proceedings and trials, members of the media, as defined in Section 1-10A of the Practice Book, may record video and take photographs inside a courthouse, if:
  - The videotaping or photographing takes place only within normal working hours;

- The videotaping or photographing is not disruptive;
- Members of the public are not included in the videos or photographs, unless written permission is obtained; and
- The requests are approved by the Chief Court Administrator, in consultation with the appropriate Administrative Judge.

All requests to broadcast, televise, record and photograph should be submitted to the External Affairs Division.

## *Miscellaneous:*

A person may use an electronic device to make an audio or video recording or to take photographs of a public meeting that is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and which is taking place in a superior court facility subject to the following:

- The recording or photographing is done as inconspicuously as possible.
- The recording or photographing is done in a safe, non-disruptive manner.
- The group holding a public meeting subject to the Freedom of Information Act may decide before the meeting reasonable rules controlling the recording or photographing of the meeting based on the need for:
  - Order,
  - Safety, and
  - Decorum of the public agency and those attending the meeting.
- Persons using equipment for recording or photographing a public meeting may use the equipment only for those purposes and shall not use it for any other purposes except as permitted by these guidelines.

The judicial marshals shall make sure that equipment is only used as allowed by these guidelines and any rule adopted by a group holding a meeting that is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. The equipment or the film or other media used in making a recording or photograph may be confiscated if the equipment is used in a way that violates these guidelines or if it is used in a way that violates the rules set by the group holding the meeting subject to the Freedom of Information Act, as long as there is notice of those rules before the meeting.

The right to use of an electronic device to make an audio or video recording or to take photographs of a public meeting that is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act and which is taking place in a superior court facility will be decided by the group holding the meeting and the judicial marshals shall make sure that equipment is only used as allowed by the group.

Any person employed in a state’s attorney’s office or a public defender’s office that is located in a court facility may use a cellular telephone or other electronic device in such office and may authorize another person to use a cellular telephone or other electronic device in such office. These guidelines do not apply to employees of the Judicial Branch who must comply with Judicial Branch policies concerning the possession and use of electronic devices in court facilities. These guidelines do not restrict in any way the possession or use of electronic devices in court facilities by judges of the superior court, judge trial referees, state referees, family support magistrates or family support referees or the authority of such judicial authorities to permit others to use electronic devices in chambers.

**Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III**  
**Chief Court Administrator**

**Effective March 3, 2014; approved on March 3, 2014, in accordance with Practice Book § 1-10; Revised July 5, 2018; revisions effective July 5, 2018.**

The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation, in accordance with the ADA, contact a Judicial Branch employee or an ADA contact person listed at [www.jud.ct.gov/ada/](http://www.jud.ct.gov/ada/).