

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

POLICY REGARDING ELECTONIC DEVICES IN THE COURTHOUSE

Purpose: It is the policy of the Sixth Judicial District to support the emerging need for use of electronic devices during court proceedings, while upholding the need for courtroom security, decorum, and protection of individual rights. This policy sets out the permitted and prohibited use of electronic devices including, but not limited to, cellular and smart phones, laptop and tablet-style computers, recording and photographic equipment in the courtrooms and adjacent areas of the Sixth Judicial District.

General Prohibitions:

No pictures or recordings shall be taken in any courtroom or court corridor in the courthouse.

Rule 4.01 of the General Rules of Practice of the District Court

Dignity and solemnity shall be maintained in the courtroom. There shall be no unnecessary conversation, loud whispering, newspaper or magazine reading or other distracting activities while court is in session.

Rule 2.01(a) of the General Rules of Practice of the District Court

No person shall use an electronic device to communicate information to or from a courtroom, unless otherwise approved by this policy, by the presiding judge, or by the chief judge.

Acceptable Use of Electronics:

The use of electronic devices is prohibited in any courtroom or hearing room in the district, with the following exceptions:

- The use of audio/visual recordings to create an official court record of courtroom proceedings.
- Approved uses of recording devices for courthouse security purposes.
- The use of interactive video hearings pursuant to Rule 1.05 of the Minnesota Rules of Criminal Procedure, and as allowed by Rule 4.01 of the Minnesota General Rules of Practice for District Courts.
- Licensed attorneys (and their designees) may use electronic devices for work related purposes (including work related communication by e-mail or text messaging with others).
- Pro se litigants may use electronic devices while participating in hearings or trials, but only with prior approval from the presiding judge.

- Court staff, guardians ad litem, social workers, law enforcement officers, probation officers, and court approved court advocates may use electronic devices for work purposes while participating in hearings or trials, or while meeting with clients.

- Members of the media, with prior approval by the presiding judge or chief judge, may use electronic devices for work purposes while reporting on hearings or trials, provided the electronic device is placed in “airplane” mode or another similar mode that disables all communication, wi-fi, and internet access.

- Use of such devices in court areas for ceremonial and educational purposes shall be allowed with appropriate permission by the presiding judge or chief judge.

- Other uses as approved by the presiding judge or chief judge.

Electronic devices shall only be operated under the following conditions:

- Electronic device usage is limited to work-related matters.

- When used, electronic devices must be used in a non-distracting manner.

- Electronic devices must be silent at all times when present in any courtroom.

- Electronic devices shall not be used for incoming or outgoing calls, unless specifically permitted by the presiding judge.

- All persons appearing in District Court must maintain appropriate decorum as outlined in court rules and as established by the presiding judge.

A person using an electronic device in a manner prohibited by this policy may be subject to one or more of the following sanctions, including, but not limited to:

- A direction to leave the courtroom,

- A direction to forfeit the device to court security,

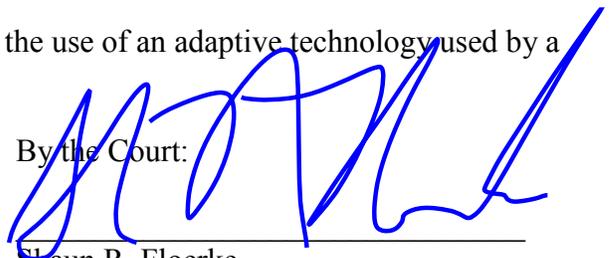
- Citation, detention, and prosecution for contempt of court or other statutory violation.

These procedures are not intended to interfere with the use of an adaptive technology used by a person with a disability.

Date:

11/4/14

By the Court:



Shaun R. Floerke
Chief Judge, Sixth Judicial District