



Memorandum

To: Bankruptcy Practitioners in the Middle District of Georgia
From: Kyle George, Clerk of Court
Subject: GAMB Use of Electronic Devices in Courtrooms

October 14, 2016

1. General: The following policy governs the possession and use of electronic devices in U.S. Bankruptcy Court courtrooms. This policy applies only to proceedings in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court courtrooms in Macon and Columbus and U.S. Bankruptcy Court proceedings conducted in District Court courtrooms in Albany, Athens, and Valdosta. This policy supersedes any previous policy issued by this court. Attorneys are reminded that use of electronic devices in District Court courtrooms during District Court proceedings are governed by that court's policy.

2. Prohibited Items:

a. Except as specifically authorized, the following items may not be brought into the courthouses: "smart phones" (mobile phones with an advanced mobile operating system which combines features of a personal computer operating system with other features useful for mobile or handheld use) and any other cellular telephones (hereafter "cellular devices"), cameras (whether incorporated with a cellular device or separately), pagers, audio and video tape recorders, DVD recorders, personal digital assistants, laptop computers, and all similar devices capable of communicating wirelessly or otherwise, from and to the courthouses.

b. Unless allowed by an exception in this policy, under no circumstances shall any electronic devices be used to photograph, broadcast, or transmit judicial proceedings or to conduct audio or video recordings of judicial proceedings, whether these proceedings are held in open court or in the chambers of a Judge of this court.

3. Exceptions:

a. Judges and Judges Chamber Staff, employees of the Clerk's office, law enforcement officers having official business within the courthouse facility, attorneys (including any attorney in the office of the United States Attorney or the United States Trustee's office) and their staffs

(hereafter “authorized individuals”) shall be permitted to bring electronic devices, including laptop computers, cellular devices, with or without a camera, into the courthouses, subject to screening by court security personnel.

b. Cellular devices may remain on if the intended purpose is to provide authorized individuals the capability of accessing the internet or their calendars. However, in all cases the cellular device will be silenced so as not to interrupt or otherwise disrupt court proceedings. The authorized individual will not use the court’s wireless access point and must have his or her own internet service provider. No technical support of any kind will be provided by the court or court staff to attorneys regarding the use of electronic devices in the courtroom. If the individual does not need to access the internet while in the courtroom, the cellular device should remain off.

c. Cellular devices may be used in the courthouses by authorized individuals outside the courtrooms, provided they do not interrupt or otherwise disrupt court proceedings. Use of cellular devices in hallways and conference rooms may be restricted by court security personnel for security reasons, subject to review by a Judge of this court.

d. Other Federal court employees not specified in paragraph 3(a) in the exercise of their official duties and employees of the General Services Administration shall be permitted to possess cellular devices while in the courthouse, subject to screening by court personnel.

e. Court security personnel may bar from the courthouse any device that appears to pose a threat to the security, safety, or integrity of judicial proceedings.

f. Members of the general public, including those summoned as jurors, may NOT bring any electronic devices into the courthouses and shall be directed to leave such devices at home or in their vehicles prior to requesting entrance into the court facility.

g. The foregoing policy may be suspended for ceremonial or educational proceedings in the discretion of the Clerk of Court or any Judge of this court.

h. The foregoing policy shall not apply to official court reporters in the performance of their official duties. Any use of audio or video recording or transcription services or equipment other than by the official court reporters must be approved by the presiding Judge.

4. Use of Electronic Devices for Members of the Press:

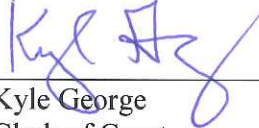
a. Members of the press, who present credentials to court security personnel showing that they are employees of a news gathering organization, shall be permitted to bring into the courthouse and courtroom the following electronic devices subject to screening by court security personnel: cellular devices, wireless devices such as iPads or iPhones, laptop computers or other personal digital assistants (PDA’s).

b. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL ANY ELECTRONIC DEVICE BE USED TO PHOTOGRAPH, VISUALLY RECORD, OR AUDIBLY RECORD ANYTHING INSIDE THE COURTHOUSE, AND NOTHING MAY BE BROADCAST FROM THE COURTROOM. For purposes of this policy, a reporter may electronically transmit the reporter's description of the proceedings via email, instant messaging, or other similar electronic message system.

c. All electronic devices will be set to a "silent" mode so that no audible sounds are detectable from the device, and the user of the device shall ensure that the use of the device is not otherwise disruptive to the proceedings.

d. The use of any electronic device may be prohibited by the presiding Judge depending on the nature of the proceeding and applicable law.

e. Court security personnel shall notify the presiding Judge when a member of the press is permitted in the courtroom with an electronic device.



Kyle George
Clerk of Court