

Justice of the Peace Court – Precinct 3 – Cass County

Electronic Devices and Recording Policy

Purpose

To preserve the dignity, order, and decorum of the court, ensure the fair administration of justice, and protect the privacy and safety of all participants, this policy governs the possession and use of cell phones, recording devices, and other electronic equipment in the courtroom and adjacent court areas.

Policy

1. Prohibited Devices

The following devices are prohibited in the courtroom, hearing rooms, and any area required for court proceedings to be conducted, such as, but not limited to: court entrance / exit, court lobby, wait room, court offices, and restrooms **unless expressly authorized by the Judge in advance. Those devices include, but are not limited to:**

- Cell phones
- Video cameras
- Tape recorders or other audio recording devices
- Digital cameras
- Any other mechanical or electronic device capable of photographing, recording, or transmitting audio, video, or data

2. Authorized Use

- The **use** of any prohibited device for photographing, video recording, audio recording, streaming, texting, emailing, or any other communication or data transmission during court proceedings and/or on court property is **strictly forbidden** without prior approval of the Judge unless indicated otherwise.
- This includes the use of such devices by parties, witnesses, attorneys, spectators, or members of the public.
- Smart watches, fitness trackers, or similar wearable devices capable of recording, transmitting, or receiving data will be allowed in the courtroom but are subject to the same no photography, no recording, and no transmission of audio, video, or data outlined in this policy.

3. Court Premises / Courtroom Decorum

- Court personnel should be informed prior to the hearing date if evidence on a phone will be required at the hearing.
- Those scheduled for court may wait in their vehicles until they are called for their court case in order to use their personal devices.

4. Permission by the Court

- The Judge may grant permission for the use of recording or electronic devices on a case-by-case basis.
- Permission must be requested **in advance** of the proceeding, in writing, and must specify the purpose and intended use of the recording.
- If granted, the Court may impose conditions on the manner, location, or scope of recording to avoid disruption, maintain confidentiality, and preserve courtroom decorum.

5. Violations

- Adherence to this policy is required. Any violation of this policy may result in one or more of the following actions:
 - Confiscation of the device;
 - Removal from the courtroom;
 - Contempt of court proceedings as authorized by law.

6. Court Personnel and Law Enforcement

- Court staff, law enforcement, and authorized personnel may possess and use electronic devices in the performance of official duties, as permitted by the Judge.

Notice

Signs stating **“Pursuant to court policy, audio, video, and photographic recording is prohibited. Use is allowed only with advance authorization from the Presiding Judge.”** shall be prominently posted at court and courtroom entrances.

Authority

This policy is adopted pursuant to the authority of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 18c and the inherent powers of the court to regulate its proceedings and maintain order and decorum.