

ECTOR COUNTY SHERIFF'S COURTHOUSE SECURITY DIVISION

GENERAL ORDER

PURPOSE

The Ector County Sheriff's Office Security Division of Ector County is dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment both in and around the Ector County Courthouse for visitors and county employees.

POLICY

The primary responsibility of the Ector County Sheriff's Office Courthouse Security Division is the safety and security of the courts, facilities, employees and visitors to this building. Courthouse Security involves keeping dangerous weapons and hazardous items and contraband from the buildings and grounds. To accomplish this goal Courthouse Security employees will conduct searches of the building, grounds, persons and other objects to detect potential weapons, contraband, evidence, hazards, stolen property and any other item that is unnecessary for the normal conduct of county business that could possibly be a threat.

DEFINITION

Courthouse facility is defined as the Ector County Courthouse.

SECURITY POLICIES

I. FIREARMS

Firearms **will not** be permitted within the secured area of the courthouse including:

- A. Concealed license holders from all states and territories.

Exceptions

1. By specific approval of the Ector County Sheriff's Office Courthouse Security Division.
2. Peace Officers performing official duties including duties involving a prisoner, hostile witness or mental patient. Officers performing these duties will only be admitted after proper identification by Courthouse Security Division Officers; or
3. Firearms which are evidence in a trial will be admitted after notification to the Courthouse Security Division, and establishment of the safe status of the weapon.
4. Courthouse Security Deputies and Sergeant.
5. Plain clothes peace officers shall be identified by means of a colored tag issued by Courthouse Security.

II. EXPLOSIVE/INCENDIARY DEVICES OR WEAPONS

Explosive/Incendiary devices or weapons will not be permitted within the secured area of the Courthouse.

Exceptions

1. By specific approval of the Ector County Sheriff's Office Courthouse Security Division; or,
2. Explosives / explosive devices that are to be introduced as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification of the Courthouse Security Division.

III. EDGED WEAPONS

Edged weapons including but not limited to knives, scissors, ice picks and letter openers **will not** be permitted within the secured area of the courthouse.

Exceptions

1. By specific approval of the Ector County Sheriff's Office Courthouse Security Division; or,
2. Edged weapons that are to be introduced as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification of the Courthouse Security Division.
3. Office supplies for employees of the courthouse.

IV. CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Chemical weapons **will not** be permitted within the secured area of the Courthouse including:

- A. All types of mace, pepper spray or any other device designated to emit a debilitating chemical.

Exceptions

1. By specific approval of Ector County Sheriff's Office Courthouse Security Division; or,
2. Any Peace Officers performing official duties including duties involving a prisoner, hostile witness or mental patient. Officers performing these duties will only be admitted after proper identification by Courthouse Security Division personnel or,
3. Chemical weapons that are to be introduced as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification of the Courthouse Security Division.

V. CLUBS / STRIKING WEAPONS

Clubs / Striking weapons **will not** be permitted within the secured area of the courthouse.

Exceptions

1. By specific approval of Ector County Sheriff's Office Courthouse Security Division; or,
2. Any Peace Officers performing official duties including duties involving a prisoner, hostile witness or mental patient. Officers performing these duties will only be admitted after proper identification by Courthouse Security Division personnel or,
3. Clubs /Striking weapons that are to be introduced as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification of the Courthouse Security Division.

VI. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials **will not** be permitted within the secured area of the courthouse including but not limited to:

- A. All types of organic/in-organic corrosives, non corrosives, inhalants, or chemicals that are intended or could be used to inflict harm to humans or property.
- B. Any animals or reptile intended or could be used to inflict harm to humans or property.

Exception

1. By specific approval of Ector County Sheriff's Office Courthouse Security Division; or,
2. Hazardous materials being used for maintenance/cleaning inside the secured area of the Courthouse or,
3. Any hazardous materials to be introduced as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification of the Courthouse Security Division.

VII. EMERGENCY / UNFORESEEN SITUATIONS

The Ector County Sheriff's Office Courthouse Security Division will initiate any and all necessary actions to insure a safe and secure environment.

VIII. FACILITIES ENTRY

- A. Courthouse employees may enter the Courthouse through the East and North entrances by utilizing their access cards or fobs. (The Ector County Courthouse currently utilizes an I.D. scan pad system for employee entry). Employees must have identification badges displayed in a visible manner to allow Courthouse Security personnel to identify that employee. Employees may enter through the Southwest security entrance only after going through the security checkpoint as if entering as the public. (No exceptions).

Courthouse employees may exit through the East and North entrances by utilizing their access card, they may also exit through the Southwest entrance.

- B. All persons (excluding Courthouse personnel referenced in paragraph "A") will enter / exit Courthouse through the Southwest entrance.
- C. Anyone without county identification will not be allowed access into the Courthouse other than normal business hours.
- D. All persons (excluding Courthouse employees referred to in paragraph "A") entering the Courthouse during normal business hours will be screened/searched for weapons. Any person not wanting to utilize the convenience of walkthrough metal detectors and x-ray machines may be individually searched by visual observation and handheld metal detector.
- E. **Employees using an access card to enter the courthouse will be required to prohibit any access other than their own.** If any employee observes any unauthorized access must notify security at once.

Exceptions

- 1. An employee may allow access to another Courthouse employee.
- 2. An employee who is escorting their minor child or spouse into the building may allow the minor child or spouse to accompany the employee through the East entrance.
- F. All electronic access cards to the Courthouse facilities will be authorized by the Ector County Sheriff's Office Courthouse Security Sergeant. No other county employee will make or issue these access cards.
- G. Accommodations will be made for any person with a handicap or disability by Courthouse Security personnel. Employees presenting a medical excuse will be allowed accommodations as recommended.

IX. VIOLATION

- A. No person will be allowed unauthorized access into the Courthouse. Persons gaining unauthorized access will be escorted from the facility, and if conditions warrant, arrested.
- B. Employee violations of Courthouse Security policy:

FIRST VIOLATION - the employee's Department Head or Elected Official will be present with a notice of violation for the employee who violated the policy. The notice will advise the Department Head/Elected Official of the time and date of the violation, as well as the infraction committed.

SECOND VIOLATION - The offending employee's access card will be deactivated for 30 days. The employee's Department Head/ Elected Official will be responsible for opening the Employee Entrance / Exit for the employee each day during the deactivation period.

THIRD VIOLATION - The offending employee's access card will be deactivated permanently. The employee's Department Head/Elected Official will be responsible for opening the Employee Entrance / Exit for the employee to gain access to or leave the Courthouse.

X. INCLUSION CLAUSE

Any issue not expressly referenced herein will be addressed at the discretion of Courthouse Security Sergeant.

Revised 10/9/2014