

2026 AUG 19 A 10:35

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF CHATHAM COUNTY
EASTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA

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Curtis M. Miller

STANDING ORDER REGARDING POLICY ON PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES

It is the finding of the judges of the Superior Court of Chatham County that court proceedings are continually disrupted due to the use of portable electronic devices, particularly cellular phones. Maintaining decorum, good order and respect for the legal process demands that all electronic devices be silenced prior to entry into any courtroom when court is in session and prior to entry into a judge's chambers for any hearing or other proceeding. Accordingly, the following Portable Electronic Device Policy shall be in effect:

Definitions.

- (1) **"Portable Electronic Devices"** are mobile devices capable of electronically storing, accessing, transmitting, or receiving data, audio, video, and other information. Such devices include, but are not limited to, personal computers, tablet computers, mobile phones, electronic calendars, e-book readers, "smart" devices (including watches, glasses and other personal accessories or so-called "wearables"), and other similar devices, which are equipped with any form of camera, audio or video recording capabilities, AI functionality, internet or other network connectivity, streaming capabilities, or the capability to receive or transmit any form over data over a wired or over-the-air network.
- (2) **"Court Visitor"** means any individual present in the Chatham County Courthouse, except court employees. Employees with official business in the courthouse may bring Portable Electronic Devices into the Chatham County Courthouse.

Portable Electronic Device Policy.

- (1) **Use in Common Areas:** Except as restricted below, Court Visitors may use Portable Electronic Devices in the common areas of the courthouse, such as lobbies and hallways. Further restrictions, including restricting mobile telephone conversations to designated areas, may be imposed as needed to maintain safety, security, proper behavior, order, and the administration of justice. All Portable Electronic Devices must be placed in "silent" mode at all times within the courthouse.
- (2) **Use in Courtrooms:** Case participants including lawyers, parties (including self-represented litigants), and witnesses may use a Portable Electronic Device inside a courtroom to check calendars or present case-related information with permission of the

Court. All other uses of Portable Electronic Devices inside courtrooms are prohibited, unless specifically authorized by the judge presiding in the courtroom. All Portable Electronic Devices must remain in “silent” mode at all times in courtrooms. “Smart” devices (including, glasses and other personal accessories or so-called “wearables,” but excluding watches that do not record or livestream) are prohibited and may not be brought inside the courtroom, unless the case participant, lawyer or Court Visitor receives express, advanced, written approval from the Court.

(3) Prohibited Uses in Common Areas and Courtrooms: The taking of photographs, audio and video recordings, and livestreaming are generally prohibited without prior approval of a judge or as governed by Uniform Superior Court Rule 22. No Court Visitor may use a Portable Electronic Device to communicate or attempt to communicate with any potential juror or juror at any time. No Court Visitor may use a Portable Electronic Device to harass, intimidate, or communicate about given testimony with any witness at any time.

(4) Other Electronic Devices: Cameras, video cameras, video recording equipment and recording devices not classified as Portable Electronic Devices are not allowed in the courthouse, unless permitted under Uniform Superior Court Rule 22, or authorized by a presiding judge, and on such conditions as ordered.

(5) Confiscation of Equipment and Ejection: Court Visitors using a Portable Electronic Device, or possessing other electronic devices, in violation of this or any other court order or policy may be removed from the courthouse, found in contempt of court, or subject to penalties as provided by law. Any Portable Electronic Device used in violation of an order may be confiscated and held until the possessor leaves the courthouse. Court personnel shall not be responsible or liable for any damage to or loss of a confiscated Portable Electronic Device.

(6) Restrictions on Portable Electronic Devices: If a presiding judge determines that Portable Electronic Devices interfere with the administration of justice in their courtroom, or cause a threat to safety or security, they may prohibit Portable Electronic Devices from being carried into specific courtrooms.

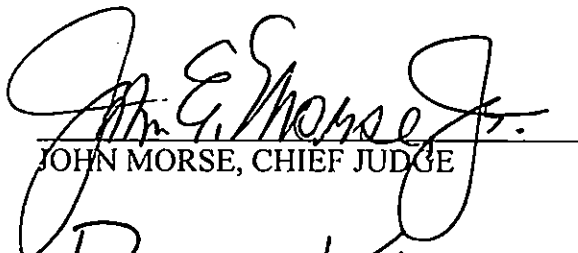
(7) Suspension or Modification of This Rule During Heightened Security: The privileges conferred by this order shall be subject to suspension or modification without notice in the event that the Sheriff or the Chief Judge of the Eastern Judicial Circuit declares a need for a heightened level of security at the courthouse.

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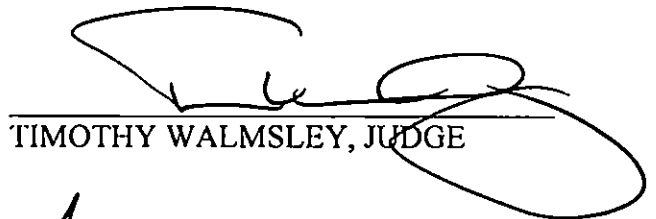
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that a person's failure to silence his or her Portable Electronic Devices constitutes direct contempt of court and an interference with the administration of justice and is punishable summarily. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that bringing any "smart" device (including, glasses, other personal accessories or so-called "wearables,") into the courtroom in violation of paragraph 2, above, constitutes direct contempt of court and an interference with the administration of justice and is punishable summarily. The Sheriff's Office may immediately confiscate any device that is used in violation of the policies enumerated in this order. Any confiscated device shall be disposed of as deemed appropriate by the Court or the Sheriff's Office. Other sanctions may include a fine up to \$1,000 or a sentence of confinement not to exceed twenty (20) days in jail or both.

This order shall not apply to the official communication equipment in the possession of employees of the Sheriff's Office. A copy of this Order shall be prominently posted in each Courtroom.

SO ORDERED this 19th day of August, 2026.



JOHN MORSE, CHIEF JUDGE



TIMOTHY WALMSLEY, JUDGE



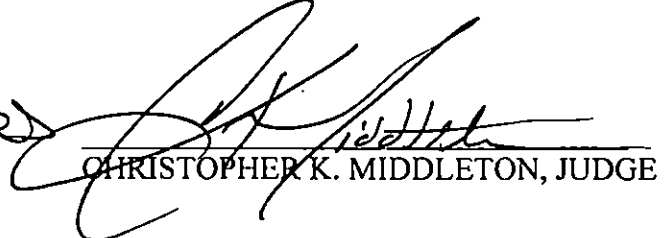
BENJAMIN KARPf, JUDGE



LISA COLBERT, JUDGE



TAMMY STOKES, JUDGE



CHRISTOPHER K. MIDDLETON, JUDGE