

**FILED**

**MAY 27 2025**

Clerk of Superior Court of California,  
County of Sonoma  
By *[Signature]*  
Deputy Clerk

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SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SONOMA

USE OF CAMERAS IN THE  
COURTHOUSE

**GENERAL ORDER**

No one except authorized Superior Court of California, County of Sonoma (Court) and court security personnel may engage in photographing, recording, or broadcasting, or activating any camera, microphone, recorder, or broadcasting device in any courtroom or courthouse in the County where the Court conducts business, including all entrances, exits, hallways, escalators, elevators, and adjacent or subterranean court parking areas except as permitted by Superior Court of Sonoma County, Local Rules, Rule 19.3 and California Rules of Court, rule 1.150, or as permitted by this order or other order of a judicial officer as set forth herein. This order shall not preclude any law enforcement officer from taking appropriate steps to ensure the orderly and peaceable conduct of court business at a courthouse, including the recording of criminal activity in progress. A law enforcement officer's use of a body camera for passive recording is allowed, provided the camera is set to automatically overwrite data within the timeframe prescribed by the officer's departmental standards.

For purposes of this rule, the following definitions apply:

- a) **Camera** – Any device that has a primary function of recording images and is not part of a multifunction device such as a “smartphone.”
- b) **Wearable Electronic Device and Wearable Camera** – Any miniature electronic device that is worn under, with, or on top of clothing and having a primary purpose of image capture or recording (such as Personal Body

1 Cameras, Go Pro Cameras, Lapel Pin cameras, etc.).

2 c) **Personal Electronic Device** – Any device capable of communicating,  
3 transmitting, receiving, or recording messages, images, sounds, data, or other  
4 information by any means including but not limited to a computer, tablet, cell  
5 phone, smartphone, or Bluetooth device.

6 This order applies to the use of any and all Cameras, Wearable Electronic Devices and  
7 Wearable Cameras and Personal Electronic Devices as defined above.

8 Except for representatives of media or media agencies as defined in California Rules of  
9 Court, rule 1.150(b)(2), no person shall bring into any courthouse a Camera, Wearable Electronic  
10 Device, or Wearable Camera as defined above. No person shall operate a Camera, Wearable  
11 Electronic Device, Wearable Camera, or Personal Electronic Device in violation of California  
12 Rules of Court, rule 1.150 and Superior Court of Sonoma County Local Rule 19.3. To establish  
13 whether a person is bringing a Camera, Wearable Electronic Device, or Wearable Camera into  
14 the courthouse for the purpose of media coverage, security personnel may require that person to  
15 either provide a press pass issued by a local law enforcement agency, other verifiable press  
16 credentials, or a copy of a current filed petition seeking a court order.

17 Personal Electronic Devices may be brought into a court facility but may be used only in  
18 accordance with California Rules of Court, Rule 1.150 and Local Rule 19.3. All electronic  
19 devices may be inspected by court security personnel.

20 All persons entering any courthouse shall comply with Sonoma County Superior Court,  
21 Local Rules, Rule 19.3, which provides:

22 “Photographing or recording of any kind by the media and general  
23 public is not permitted in any part of a court facility or location,  
24 including, but not limited to lobby areas, hallways, stairs, and  
25 elevators.”

26 This order does not prohibit the use of portable scanners, cameras, or copiers, provided  
27 such devices are used solely for the permissive purpose of imaging documents.

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1 Prior to entering a courtroom, cellular phones, pagers, and all other electronic  
2 communication or recording devices must be silenced or, in the discretion of the judicial officer,  
3 turned off. No such device shall be handled in any way as to indicate that a picture, audio, or  
4 video recording is being taken except in compliance with Local Rule 19.3. Any such device  
5 which disrupts the proceedings shall be subject to confiscation and search. Nothing in this order  
6 shall restrict a judicial officer's discretion to regulate the use of such devices in their courtroom.

7 This order is for the protection of the public, all parties, and court personnel, and to  
8 facilitate the fair and orderly resolution of cases. This order is subject to modification based upon  
9 specific circumstances and the discretion of an individual judicial officer in that judicial officer's  
10 courtroom, the Supervising Judge of a discipline, or the Assistant Presiding Judge in the event of  
11 the unavailability of the Presiding Judge.

12 A copy of this order shall be posted on the Court's Web site and shall be made  
13 reasonably available. Violation of this order may result in seizure of the device, monetary  
14 sanctions pursuant to section 177.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure, and/or a finding of contempt  
15 pursuant to sections 128 and 1209 of the Code of Civil Procedure, and/or arrest pursuant to Penal  
16 Code sections 166(a)(4), 166(a)(5), and 632.

17 Any court staff, security personnel, or peace officer who becomes aware that a person is  
18 using a device in violation of this order is directed to advise such individual orally of this order  
19 and take steps to provide the person with a written copy of this order as soon as practical.  
20 Security personnel or a peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe a violation of this  
21 order has occurred are requested to prepare an incident report, and if the circumstances warrant  
22 immediate corrective action because the person persists in violating this order despite being  
23 informed of it or has violated the order in a way that appears to have a significant adverse impact  
24 upon court security or the fair and orderly resolution of cases, shall take possession of the device  
25 and bring the person without unnecessary delay to the courtroom judicial officer, discipline  
26 Supervising Judge, Assistant Presiding Judge or Presiding Judge, as may be appropriate, to  
27 determine if there is sufficient cause to believe there has been a violation of this order without  
28 good cause or substantial justification. Such judicial officer may take such action or issue such

1 orders concerning the device or issue an order to show cause regarding imposition of sanctions  
2 or contempt pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure sections 128, 177.5, and 1209, as may be  
3 appropriate.

4 GOOD CAUSE APPEARING THEREFOR, IT IS SO ORDERED.

5 Effective immediately, this General Order is to remain in effect until otherwise ordered  
6 by the Presiding Judge.

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DATED: *May 27, 2025*



CHRISTOPHER HONIGSBERG  
PRESIDING JUDGE  
SONOMA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT