

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER PROHIBITING WEAPONS IN COURT BUILDINGS

Whereas, open access to secure safe courts promotes a sense of confidence in the stability of civil government;

Whereas, it is vital that citizens feel confident and safe in seeking access to their courts and that court personnel feel safe in the performance of their duties;

It is this 28th day of February, 2014 ORDERED by the Circuit Court for Somerset County:

1. Definitions

a. Corrections officer: An employee of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services or a county corrections office responsible for prisoner transport or security.

b. Court security officer: A deputy of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office or other law enforcement officer performing court security duties.

c. Law enforcement officer: Maryland State Police officers; members of the duly constituted police department of any Maryland county or Baltimore City, or any other duly constituted municipality in this state, or any state university or college; City and County Sheriffs, and their deputies; Nation Resources Police officers; Maryland Transportation Authority police; Mass Transit Administration police; members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Marshals, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and members of the U.S. Secret Service.

d. Court personnel: Judges, masters, the Clerk of Court, the Register of Wills, and employees of this Court, the Clerk's Office, and the Registers of Wills.

e. Officers of the court: Members of the practicing bar.

2. Policy

a. The Somerset County Sheriff is responsible for security in and around the court buildings.

b. All persons -- except court personnel and officers of the court -- entering a court building are required to pass through the metal detector at the entrance door and any other screening as deemed necessary by court security officers. Weapons, contraband or non-permitted items (e.g., sharp instruments) will be taken into possession by a court security officer who will log any items and notify the supervisor so that an incident report may be completed. Certain non-permitted items, e.g., pocket knife, may be returned to the person upon leaving the courthouse.

c. No person shall carry, transport, or possess any weapon or firearm in any court facility, except:

i. On-duty court security officers;

ii. On-duty correctional officers;

iii. Law enforcement officers attending court in performance of their official duties.

d. Persons in possession of weapons of any kind, including law enforcement and correctional officers, who are entering a court building for an appearance as a party or witness in a personal case unrelated to the performance of their official duties will not be permitted to carry their weapons into court buildings. Off-duty law enforcement officers will be responsible for securing their own weapons off the premises.

Daniel M. Long
Administrative Judge
Circuit Court for Somerset County