

MARYLAND RULES OF PROCEDURE

TITLE 16 - COURTS, JUDGES, AND ATTORNEYS

CHAPTER 100 - COURT ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE, JUDICIAL  
DUTIES, ETC.

ADD new Rule 16-110, as follows:

Rule 16-110. CELL PHONES; OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES; CAMERAS

(a) Definitions

In this Rule the following definitions apply:

(1) Court Facility

"Court facility" means the building in which a circuit court or the District Court is located, but if the court is in a building that is also occupied by county or State executive agencies having no substantial connection with the court, then only that part of the building occupied by the court.

(2) Electronic Device

"Electronic device" means (A) a cell phone, a computer, and any other device that is capable of transmitting, receiving, or recording messages, images, sounds, data, or other information by electronic means or that, in appearance, purports to be a cell phone, computer, or such other device; and (B) a camera, regardless of whether it operates electronically, mechanically, or otherwise and regardless of whether images are recorded by using digital technology, film, light-sensitive plates, or other means.

(3) Local Administrative Judge

"Local administrative judge" means the county administrative judge in a circuit court and the district administrative judge in the District Court.

(b) Possession and Use of Electronic Devices

(1) Generally

Subject to inspection by court security personnel and the restrictions and prohibitions set forth in this section, a person may (A) bring an electronic device into a court facility and (B) use the electronic device for the purpose of sending and receiving phone calls and electronic messages and for any other lawful purpose not otherwise prohibited.

(2) Restrictions and Prohibitions

(A) Rule 5-615 Order

An electronic device may not be used to facilitate or achieve a violation of an order entered pursuant to Rule 5-615 (d).

(B) Photographs and Video

Except as permitted in accordance with this Rule, Rule 16-109, Rule 16-405, or Rule 16-504 or as expressly permitted by the local administrative judge, a person may not (i) take or record a photograph, video, or other visual image in a court facility, or (ii) transmit a photograph, video, or other visual image from or within a court facility.

Committee note: The prohibition set forth in subsection (b)(2)(B) of this Rule includes still photography and moving visual images. It is anticipated that permission will be granted for the taking of photographs at ceremonial functions.

(C) Interference with Court Proceedings or Work

An electronic device shall not be used in a manner that interferes with court proceedings or the work of court personnel.

Committee note: An example of a use prohibited by subsection (b) (2) (C) is a loud conversation on a cell phone near a court employee's work station or in a hallway near the door to a courtroom.

(D) Jury Deliberation Room

An electronic device may not be brought into a jury deliberation room.

(E) Courtroom

(i) Except with the express permission of the presiding judge or as otherwise permitted by this Rule, Rule 16-109, Rule 16-405, or Rule 16-504, all electronic devices inside a courtroom shall remain off and no electronic device may be used to receive, transmit, or record sound, visual images, data, or other information.

(ii) Subject to subsection (b) (2) (F), the court shall liberally allow the attorneys in a proceeding currently being heard, their employees, and agents to make reasonable and lawful use of an electronic device in connection with the proceeding.

(F) Security or Privacy Issues in a Particular Case

Upon a finding that the circumstances of a particular case raise special security or privacy issues that justify a restriction on the possession of electronic devices, the local administrative judge or the presiding judge may enter an order

limiting or prohibiting the possession of electronic devices in a courtroom or other designated areas of the court facility. The order shall provide for notice of the designated areas and for the collection of the devices and their return when the individual who possessed the device leaves the courtroom or other area. No liability shall accrue to the security personnel or any other court official or employee for any loss or misplacement of or damage to the device.

(c) Violation of Rule

(1) Security personnel or other court personnel may confiscate and retain an electronic device that is used in violation of this Rule, subject to further order of the court or until the owner leaves the building. No liability shall accrue to the security personnel or any other court official or employee for any loss or misplacement of or damage to the device.

(2) An individual who willfully violates this Rule or any reasonable limitation imposed by the local administrative judge or the presiding judge may be found in contempt of court and sanctioned in accordance with the Rules in Title 15, Chapter 200.

(d) Notice

(1) Notice of the provisions of sections (b) and (c) of this Rule shall be:

(A) posted prominently at the court facility;

(B) included on the main judiciary website and the website of each court; and

(C) disseminated to the public by any other means approved

in an administrative order of the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals.

Source: This Rule is new.