

**THE SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
STATE OF COLORADO  
BENT COUNTY, CROWLEY COUNTY,  
AND OTERO COUNTY**

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**JOINT ORDER REGARDING THE USE OF  
ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN COURT FACILITIES**

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**2021-03**

In accordance with the inherent authority of the Sixteenth Judicial District, the Otero County Combined Courts, the Crowley County Combined Courts, and the Bent County Combined Courts to manage their facilities, the Chief Judge of the Sixteenth Judicial District and the presiding judges of district and county courts, enter the following Order governing conduct inside all court-related facilities, which includes the Department of Probation, located within the Counties of Otero, Crowley, including, but not limited to: the Otero County Courthouse, Crowley County Courthouse, and Bent County Courthouse.

The Courts have the responsibility and authority to ensure performance of judicial functions and to protect the dignity, independence, and integrity of the Courts, and to make the lawful actions of the Court effective. Specifically, the Courts must ensure the orderly use of Court facilities. Those having business with the Courts must be able to conduct their business freely, in a safe and orderly fashion and unhindered by threats, confrontation, interference, and harassment. The Courts also must provide a secure environment for all who enter and work in Court facilities. The Courts further must minimize activities that unreasonably disrupt or interfere with the orderly and peaceful conduct of Court business. It is imperative that the Courts provide for the fair and orderly conduct of hearings and trials and maintain proper judicial decorum by ensuring neutral forums that are free from actual or perceived partiality, bias, prejudice, or favoritism. Accordingly, the Courts find that it is reasonably necessary and appropriate to impose certain restrictions on the use of electronic devices in Court facilities.

This Order applies to all areas of the Otero County Courthouse, Crowley County Courthouse, and Bent County Courthouse.

- Court facilities include, but are not limited to, probation facilities, security screening areas, lobbies, elevators, judges' chambers, clerks' offices, court offices, and the hallways adjacent to these areas.
- This Order does not apply to the portions of the county buildings that are occupied and controlled exclusively by either the executive or legislative branch of county or city government, including: the offices of the boards of county commissioners, offices of the clerks and recorder, offices of the treasurers, offices of the county assessors, county health departments, departments of human services, county meeting rooms.

This Order does not limit the authority of judicial officers to issue necessary and reasonable orders governing the use of electronic devices inside their courtrooms or in matters



pending before them. Such orders may be general or standing, case or matter specific, or individual specific. A judicial officer may further restrict or expand the use and possession of electronic devices in the Court facilities, including, but not limited to, permitting the use of electronic devices at ceremonial events such as investitures, ceremonies, adoptions, and weddings.

### **USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

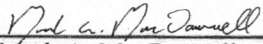
1. **Courtrooms**: All electronic devices in possession of the general public shall be turned off immediately upon entering any courtroom in the 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District and must remain off at all times while in the courtroom, unless otherwise authorized by the Court. Excepting security and Court personnel, no person shall use an electronic or other device to take photographs, make audio or video recordings, make telephone calls, or transmit live audio or video streaming of any proceeding or person. Colorado Supreme Court Rules, Chapter 38, Court Rule 3, Media Coverage of Court Proceedings shall be followed for all requests for expanded media coverage inside courtrooms.
2. **All other areas within Court and Probation Facilities**: Electronic devices may be used so long as the use is not disruptive of court-related business. Cell phones must be set to vibrate or silent ring settings. However, except for authorized court personnel, law enforcement officers, and security personnel, no person shall use an electronic or other device to take photographs, make audio or video recordings, or transmit live audio or video streaming in any part of the Court facilities, unless specifically permitted by the Court.
3. **Media Exception in Designated Areas**: Members of the media may use electronic or other devices to photograph, make audio or video recordings, or broadcast only in those areas clearly marked with signs for media use only with express consent of the Court. Judicial officers may expand the areas designated for media coverage in matters pending before them as may be necessary.
4. **Certain Recording and Photography Devices Prohibited**: Except for authorized law enforcement officers, the following electronic devices are strictly prohibited in the Court Facilities: "GoPro" cameras, body-worn cameras, and electronic or other devices used to surreptitiously photograph or record. Surreptitious devices are those intended to operate covertly and include, but are not limited to, spy cameras, hidden surveillance cameras, and any other recording or photography devices attached to or concealed in clothing or other objects. This prohibition does not include cell phones, tablets, computers, laptops, or smart watches, although these and similar items remain subject to the prohibition on photography, audio or video recording, or transmitting live audio or video streaming described above.

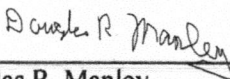
This Order shall be enforced by the Otero County Sheriff's Department, Crowley County Sheriff's Department, Bent County Sheriff's Department, and any other security staff or law enforcement officer as necessary and appropriate. This specifically includes enforcement of 18-9-111 and 18-9-117, C.R.S., and enforcement orders in furtherance of the Courts' contempt authority under C.R.C.P. 107. All persons shall comply with the lawful requests, directions, and orders of law enforcement officers and security staff in the performance of their duties.

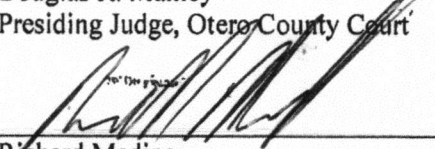


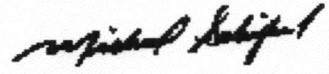
Failure to do so will constitute a violation of this Order. This Order shall not preclude law enforcement officers or security staff from taking additional appropriate steps to ensure the orderly and peaceful conduct of Court business at the Court facilities.

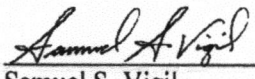
Entered this 18th day of May 2021

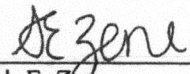
  
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Mark A. MacDonnell  
Chief Judge, Sixteenth Judicial District

  
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Douglas R. Manley  
Presiding Judge, Otero County Court

  
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Richard Medina  
Presiding Judge, Crowley County Court

  
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District Judge, Michael Schiferl  
Michael A. Schiferl  
Presiding Judge, District Court

  
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Samuel S. Vigil  
Presiding Judge, Bent County Court

  
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Sarah E. Zane  
Presiding Magistrate, District Court