STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF FORSYTH

FILED
DATE: November 16, 2026
TIME: 4:08:40 PM
FORSYTH COUNTY
CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT
BY: F. Cromwell

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
SUPERIOR AND DISTRICT COURT
DIVISIONS

IN RE:

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN COURTHOUSE

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

The undersigned Senior Resident Superior Court Judge and Chief District Court Judge for Judicial District 31 enter this administrative order regarding cell phones and other electronic devices in the Forsyth County Courthouse and the Kernersville, NC courtroom (collectively, "Forsyth County Courthouses").

IT IS **ORDERED** that:

1. Electronic Devices Prohibited. Except as otherwise authorized, all cell phones, computers, electronic tablets, cameras, or other electronic devices capable of recording or transmitting sound or images ("electronic devices") are prohibited in the Forsyth County Courthouses.

2. Exceptions to Prohibition.

   a. Authorized Persons. This prohibition does not apply to "authorized persons." Authorized persons include courthouse staff, licensed attorneys, law enforcement officers, probation officers, county or school staff entering the building on county business, Forsyth County Courthouse ID Badge Holder, AOC staff, and maintenance personnel.

      Authorized persons also include any individual who has been issued a Day Pass as provided below. Authorized persons are not allowed to photograph or record in court sessions unless authorized to do so by the presiding judge.

   b. Day Passes. The offices of the Clerk of Court, Magistrates presiding in the Courthouse, the Office of Juvenile Justice, and Guardian ad Litem Division, are authorized to issue Day Passes in the form of Exhibit A attached hereto to individuals who have meetings or other business in their respective offices or courts.

   c. *Pro Se*. Any *pro se* litigant may seek authorization from bailiffs to bring an electronic device into the courthouse if necessary for Clerk or court business. If this request is denied, then the individual should request permission from the presiding judge at the time of the hearing or the Clerk of Court for clerk-related business.

      A *pro se* litigant may also seek advanced permission for clerk-related or Superior Court matters by emailing an Application for One-Time Electronic Device Entry Permit to (name position and/or generic email address) for Clerk matters or Carolyn Dobbins for Superior Court cases at least three business days before the hearing or

meeting. There is no avenue to receive permission in advance to bring in electronic devices for District Court matters; permission must be sought the day of hearing.

The application is attached hereto as Exhibit A and can be found at nccourts.gov.

d. Clients/Witnesses. Attorneys may bring electronic devices of their clients and witnesses into the courthouse if needed for a hearing, but counsel must maintain possession of the electronic device while it is in the building. The electronic device should be turned off or placed on mute.

e. Courthouse Meetings. The Clerk of Court, Judges, Magistrates, the District Attorney's Office, and Public Defender's Office are authorized to issue Day Passes in the form of Exhibit A attached hereto to individuals to bring electronic devices to their offices for meetings.

f. Jurors. Jurors and potential jurors may bring electronic devices into the courthouse for personal use in the jury assembly room.

g. Health. Bailiffs or Security shall permit individuals identifying as having a medical requirement to have his/her electronic devices on their person to carry them into the courthouse due to medical necessity. Individuals who have a medical necessity to carry electronic devices shall not be required to place the device in a Secured Bag.

h. Hardship. Bailiffs or Security shall permit individuals identifying as having 1) a physical limitation to returning an electronic device to his/her vehicle and/or 2) having no vehicle, to carry an electronic device throughout the courthouse secured inside a Secured Bag.

i. Bail Bondsmen. Upon production of a current and valid Department of Insurance Bondsman identification card, licensed bondsmen shall be permitted to carry an electronic device throughout the courthouse.

j. Guardians ad Litem. Upon production of a current and valid NC Administrative Office of the Courts identification card, guardians ad litem shall be permitted to carry an electronic device throughout the courthouse.

k. Secured Bags. Secured Bags to store electronic devices are available and required for individuals who meet the criteria outlined herein in Paragraphs 2(b) Day Passes, 2(c) *Pro Se*, and (h) Hardship. These bags are unlocked using a base. Bases have been distributed to the various offices in the building and to courtrooms. The individual who unlocks the bag to provide access to an electronic device is also responsible for seeing that the device is relocked in the bag when it is no longer needed. A base is also available to unlock the bag upon exiting the courthouse.

3. Photographing and Recording within the Courthouse. The use of television, motion picture, video recorder, audio recorder, or still photography cameras, or any device capable of recording or transmitting sound or images in any hearing or trial is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the judge presiding in said court. Requests for authorization should be made reasonably in advance of the trial or hearing so as not to

cause a delay in the court's business. The presiding judge's authority is limited by Rule 15 of the General Rules of Practice for the Superior and District Courts. Except through authorized systems such as CRAVE, no one including Authorized Persons is allowed to photograph or record in court sessions unless authorized to do so by the presiding judge.

4. Sanctions. Violation of any provision of this order may be punished by sanctions, which may include contempt to the extent permitted by law.

5. Purpose and Background. The ability to present evidence including audio and video evidence is fundamental to our system of justice. Nothing in this order shall prohibit a party from presenting evidence.

   This order is intended, among other things, to prevent the recording and dissemination - especially on social media - of jurors, witnesses, child victims, and others. Such conduct threatens the integrity of the judicial process, endangers lives, and intimidates witnesses and jurors. This is not a mere hypothetical concern, as issues of this nature prompted this Court's original administrative order restricting electronic devices dated November 7, 2025. This updated administrative order is based on practical application of the prior order. This Order seeks to balance demonstrated security concerns with the recognition of the important needs of some individuals to have access to their electronic devices.

6. After Business Hours. This Order is not intended to prohibit individuals participating in authorized judicial, community, or educational activities from bringing electronic devices or cell phones into the Courthouse after normal business hours.

7. Effective Date. This Order is effective upon filing and supersedes any prior Orders related to the use of electronic devices in the courthouse.

11/16/2026 2:11:23 PM 11/16/2026 12:59:19 PM
Richard S. Gottlieb
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge

David E. Sipprell
Chief District Court Judge

Exhibit A

NORTH CAROLINA
FORSYTH COUNTY

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
SUPERIOR AND DISTRICT COURT DIVISIONS

APPLICATION FOR ONE-TIME ELECTRONIC DEVICE ENTRY PERMIT
(Pursuant to Administrative Order (Electronic Devices))

Applicant's Contact Information:

Full Name: _____

Physical Address: _____

Telephone No.:_____

Case Name: _____ Case No.: _____

Courtroom #: _____

Description of Device: (Check all that apply)

_____ Cell phone _____ iPad _____ Computer _____Tablet

_____ Other - Please Describe: _____

Purpose to be used in Courthouse:

_____

_____

Date/Time to be used in Courthouse: _____

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

_____ ALLOWED **_____ ALLOWED W/ SECURED BAG** **_____ DENIED**

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

(circle one)

Superior Court Judge	Clerk	Sheriff	Juvenile Justice
District Court Judge	SupCt Judges (Office)	GAL	District Attorney
Magistrate	Public Defender		