

POLICY RE: USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

In the FAMILY COURT

Family Court, by statute (*The Family Court Act of Nova Scotia*), is not open to the public or the media except during child protection hearings.

INSIDE COURTROOMS (when open to public and media):

Without permission of the court, no person shall use an electronic device, such as a cell phone, computer or personal data assistant, in a courtroom:

- to carry on a conversation while Court is in session
- to take photographs or record or produce a digital image
- to transmit an audio or video recording
- that interferes with the proceedings or the courtroom recording system by producing any noise, vibration or electronic signal.

PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED (when open to public and media):

- **Members of the public** must turn off and put away all of their electronic devices before entering the courtroom.
- **Members of the media:**
 - may not transmit information about court proceedings from inside a courtroom
 - while court is in session, for publication and by any means (including Twitter, texting, email, etc.) without the permission of the presiding Judge
 - may not answer or make a phone call while Court is in session
 - may not take pictures or record video
 - may not transmit pictures, video or audio
 - may not use an electronic device, or have one on, that disrupts what is going on in the courtroom or interferes with the courtroom recording system in any way.

ALLOWED (when open to public and media):

- **Only members of the media:**
 - may keep a cell phone on in vibrate mode only (but not talk on it)
 - may receive or transmit general text only, if it does not interfere with proceedings or the courtroom recording system
 - may use electronic devices to record the audio (only) of the proceedings to augment their note-taking but not for broadcasting.

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EXCEPTION:

When official ceremonies such as a swearing-in, or events such as Law Day, mock trials or civil weddings are held in the courthouse, the prohibitions and restrictions do not apply with regard to those specific events.

INSIDE THE COURTHOUSE, OUTSIDE COURTROOMS:

Without permission of the court, no person shall use a device such as a video/still camera, cell phone, or audio recorder inside the courthouse to produce, record or transmit audio, video or still photographs.

PROHIBITED (by members of the public):

- taking pictures
- recording video or audio
- transmitting pictures, video, or audio

ALLOWED (by everyone):

- speaking on a cell phone
- inputting text only on an electronic device
- receiving text only on an electronic device
- transmitting text only on an electronic device

EXCEPTIONS:

- **When Family Court is open to the public and media, members of the media (only)** may use audio recorders, still/video cameras, and other devices to produce, record, or transmit audio, video, or still photographs (subject to any publication bans) inside the courthouse, but not in courtrooms, and only within designated media areas where these areas exist.
- When official ceremonies such as a swearing-in, or events such as Law Day, mock trials or civil weddings are held in the courthouse, the prohibitions and restrictions do not apply with regard to those specific events.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

Contact the Executive Office of the Nova Scotia Judiciary
Jennifer Stairs, Communications Director

Phone: (902) 424-6018

Email: stairsjl@courts.ns.ca

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