

STATE OF TEXAS

§

IN THE MUNICIPAL COURTS OF

§

COUNTY OF HARRIS

§

CITY OF HOUSTON, TEXAS

**STANDING ORDER AS TO USE OF CELLULAR PHONES, PORTABLE COMPUTERS,
PHOTOGRAPHIC, RECORDING OR OTHER ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Rules of the Municipal Courts of the City of Houston, Texas give the Courts the responsibility and authority of ensuring the dignity of court proceedings;

AND WHEREAS, as technology continues to advance, this Order is established to address protocols on their usage in a court setting;

AND WHEREAS, the City of Houston Municipal Court Judges encourage the appropriate use of expanding technology in an effort to provide opportunities for all parties, in order to process court matters in a timely and efficient manner without disruption to court proceedings;

AND WHEREAS, the City of Houston Municipal Court Judges also wish to protect the privacy of parties conducting business from unwanted intrusion from others in the courtrooms;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED by the City of Houston Municipal Court Judges that the following policy shall be in effect, commencing on October 29, 2014.

1. All forms of audio-recording, video-recording and use of photographic applications are strictly prohibited in City of Houston Municipal Courts except as specified herein.
 - a. In appropriate cases, for ceremonial, marriage, or educational purposes, an exception to the above rule may be allowed by a Judge or Court Administrator.
 - b. Audio-recording, video-recording and photographic devices may be permitted during a court proceeding only with prior approval from the judge.
2. **General Public Provision:** Cellular devices, laptop computers, tablet computers, and any other electronic recording devices or photographic equipment should not be used in the courtroom and should be turned off. Social Media shall not be accessed while in the courtrooms. Such usage is allowable in the public lobby areas. Broadcasting of Court proceedings is strictly prohibited.
3. **Exceptions To This General Rule as Follows:**
 - a. Cellular devices, laptop computers, tablet computers, and any other electronic recording devices or photographic equipment, shall be placed on silent mode, but

may be used by attorneys, attorney staff, and defendants, in courtrooms under the following conditions:

- Accessing proof of financial responsibility
- Accessing case files
- Taking notes during hearings or trials
- Conducting research relevant to the case.

Usage shall not delay or disrupt court proceedings. This portion shall also apply to Juvenile Case Managers, Court staff and law enforcement personnel in their official capacity as officers of the Court.

- b. Cellular devices, laptop computers, tablet computers, and any other electronic recording devices or photographic equipment may be used in courtrooms by news media personnel for the limited purpose of taking notes of court proceedings and shall not cause disruption. Use of such devices in the courtroom requires prior approval from the Court. The Judge shall notify the Court staff of approval.
4. All persons appearing in City of Houston Municipal Courts shall adhere to Rules of the Municipal Courts of the City of Houston, Texas. Dignity and solemnity shall be maintained the in the courtroom. Unnecessary conversation, loud whispering, newspaper or magazine reading, or other distracting activity in the courtroom while Court is in session is strictly prohibited.
5. Violation of this Court Order may result in the confiscation of cellular devices, laptop computers, tablet computers, and any other electronic recording devices or photographic equipment, and/or a finding of Contempt of Court.

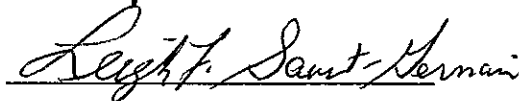
APPROVED: October 28, 2014



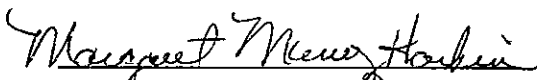
Honorable Barbara E. Hartle



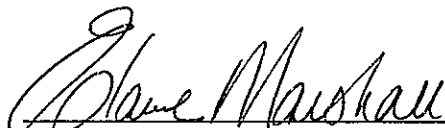
Honorable Meg Ahern Oswald



Honorable Leigh Saint-Germain



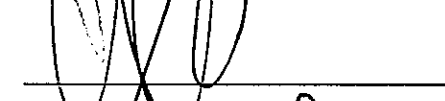
Honorable Margaret Muñoz-Harkins



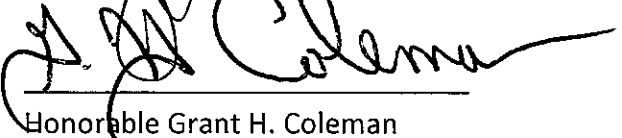
Honorable Elaine Marshall



Honorable David O. Fraga



Honorable Imelda Reyes-Castillo



Honorable Grant H. Coleman

Adam Silverman

Honorable Adam Silverman

Megan A. McLellan

Honorable Megan McLellan

Kimberly M. Gamble

Honorable Kimberly M. Gamble

Oswald Scott

Honorable Oswald Scott

Gordon Marcum

Honorable Gordon Marcum

MiHua Vo

Honorable MiHua Vo

Francelia Totty

Honorable Francelia Totty

Kim Trujillo

Honorable Kim Trujillo

Esméralda Pena-García

Honorable Esméralda Pena-García

Sherilyn D. Edwards

Honorable Sherilyn Edwards

Lawrence Rousseau

Honorable Lawrence Rousseau

Kathy Han

Honorable Kathy Han

Mimi Berkowitz

Honorable Mimi Berkowitz