

The Use of Electronic Devices in Nova Scotia Courthouses

Inside the courthouse, outside the courtroom

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.

- Allowed**
- ✓ 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

- Prohibited**
- ✗ taking pictures
 - ✗ recording video or audio
 - ✗ transmitting pictures, video, or audio

Exceptions Members of the press and media may use audio recorders, still/video cameras, and other devices to produce, record, or transmit audio, video, or still photographs inside the courthouse but not in courtrooms, and only within designated media areas where these areas exist. In courthouses that require accreditation, this exception applies only to accredited members of the press and media. (See [media guidelines – appendix F](#))

The prohibitions do not apply to anyone during official ceremonies such as a swearing in and events such as law day mock trials and weddings held in the courthouse.

Inside the courtroom

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, or which interferes with the proceedings or the recording of them by the Court's systems by producing any noise, vibration, or electronic signal.

- Allowed**
- ✓ keeping a cell phone on in vibrating mode only (but not answering it)
 - ✓ receiving text only, if it does not interfere with proceedings or the courtroom recording system
 - ✓ transmitting text only, if it does not interfere with proceedings or the courtroom recording system

- Prohibited**
- ✗ answering a phone call while Court is in session
 - ✗ making a phone call while Court is in session
 - ✗ taking pictures in a courtroom
 - ✗ recording video or audio in a courtroom
 - ✗ transmitting pictures, video, or audio in a courtroom
 - ✗ using an electronic device - or having one on - that disrupts what is going on in the courtroom in any way
 - ✗ using an electronic device - or having one on - that interferes with the courtroom recording system in any way

Exceptions Members of the press and media may use audio recorders inside courtrooms to augment their note taking, but not for broadcast. In courthouses that require accreditation, this exception applies only to accredited members of the press and media. (See [media guidelines – appendix F](#))

The prohibitions do not apply:

- to official ceremonies such as a swearing in and events such as law day mock trials and weddings held in the courthouse
- if an order of the Court has been obtained allowing the televising of proceedings of the Court of Appeal

Questions Contact the Executive Office of the Nova Scotia Judiciary

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