



HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
GENERAL ORDER OPS-19
COURT SECURITY
EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 6, 2012

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. CELLULAR PHONES & COMPUTERS IN COURTHOUSE
- III. SECURITY OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES
- IV. SWORN PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES
- V. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES IN LOCK-UP
- VI. COURTROOM SECURITY AFTER HOURS
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I. POLICY¹

The Howard County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) provides court security to the Howard County Circuit Court, including the Judges and their chamber areas.² To that end, the HCSO employs Security Personnel to provide generalized courthouse security throughout the day. Security Personnel are defined as non-sworn personnel and are governed by the same General Orders as sworn personnel.³ Additional court security is provided by HCSO Sworn Deputies.

II. CELLULAR PHONES & COMPUTERS IN COURTHOUSE

- A. Cellular phones and computers may be brought into the Courthouse, but are subject to inspection by HCSO Security Officers and Deputies. All individuals bringing a cellular phone or computer into the courthouse shall be bound by the terms of this policy.
- B. The following are restrictions placed on cellular phones and computers brought into the Courthouse:
 - 1. Computers brought into courtrooms must be turned OFF at all times. Exceptions are allowed only by a Judge or Master in the courtroom.
 - 2. Cellular phones brought into courtrooms must be turned OFF at all times. Use of the vibrate mode is unacceptable. Exceptions are allowed only by a Judge or Master in the courtroom.
 - 3. A cellular phone or computer may be used for sending and receiving calls and/or messages only:
 - a. In the courtroom when expressly authorized by a Judge or Master;
 - b. In the jury assembly room or jury deliberation rooms when the jury is NOT deliberating or when a presiding Judge has not prohibited their use during a particular case; OR
 - c. In the courthouse lobby, hallways or court offices, if the courtrooms, court staff and others waiting are not disturbed by the use.

¹ CALEA 73.1.1 a, b & c

² CALEA 73.2.1 a

³ CALEA 73.1.1 a & b

4. The use of the cellular phone or computer as a camera is expressly prohibited in all areas of the Courthouse, unless approved in advance by the administrative judge.
- C. These restrictions apply to all citizens, employees, and law enforcement personnel within the Circuit Court.
- D. Violations of Restrictions
1. Any violation of the above restrictions will result in the confiscation of the cellular phone or computer by a HCSO Deputy.
 - a. The device shall only be returned to the individual between the hours of 4:00pm and 4:30pm.
 - b. If the individual leaves the building prior to that time, she/he shall need to return during the designated hours to retrieve the device from the Sheriff's Office.
 2. In the event a Deputy observes or hears a cellular phone or computer within a courtroom, he shall consult with the Trial Judge on the appropriate course of action.
 3. Cellular phones or computers observed in violation of restrictive uses outside the courtroom will immediately be confiscated by a Deputy or Security Officer, who will immediately inform the County Administrative Judge. The County Administrative Judge shall decide the appropriate course of action.
- E. The Circuit Court, its personnel, the Sheriff's Office and anyone else involved shall hold no liability for a lost or damaged cellular phone or computer.
- F. Policy Posting
1. The Circuit Court's policy on Cellular Phones and Computers in the Courthouse shall be available at the security checkpoint upon entering the courthouse.
 2. It shall be posted on the public notice hearing board near the entrance to the courthouse.
 3. The Howard County Circuit Court's website shall also contain an electronic version of the policy.
 4. Jurors will be provided with this information during juror orientation.

II. SECURITY OFFICERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. All equipment used by Security Officers is specifically defined by General Order ADM-06, Uniform & Grooming. This equipment is available for immediate use and is maintained in a state of readiness at all times.⁴
- B. Day Shift
1. One Security Officer reports to work at 0700 hours.
 2. DUTIES
 - a. A complete check of the Circuit Court building.
 - b. Check all exterior doors of the Circuit Court building to ensure that the doors are working properly. If there is a problem with the doors, Security Officers will immediately notify the Duty Officer.

⁴ CALEA 73.4.1

- c. Accesses system, checks doors for proper operations.
- d. Checks the operation of both elevators (public & prisoner security elevators).
- e. At 0730, reports to the metal detector and X-Ray to assist the Deputy at this security checkpoint until 1000 hours.
- f. The Courthouse opens at 0800 hours and the Security Officer monitors the incoming public and operates the X-Ray machine for the detection of illegal contraband, weapons, etc.

NOTE: ALL EMPLOYEES WILL PASS THROUGH THE METAL DETECTOR AND X-RAY.

3. Security Officers reporting for work at 0800 hours.
 - a. Reports to the Circuit Court Lock-up to handle any early arriving prisoners.
 - b. Operates the lock-up controls, elevator, and Sally Port controls.
 - c. Secures prisoners into the lock-up. Searches all prisoners.
 - d. Monitors security of the lock-up area and monitors cameras.

C. Evening Shift

One (1) Security Officer reports at 1000 hours and secures at 1830 hours. One (1) Security Officer reports at 1200 hours and secures at 2030 hours.

1. Security Officers will check the daily assignment sheet – located in the Circuit Court Lock-up – for their assigned posts.
2. Security Officer Assignments are as follows:
 - a. One (1) Security Officer at the metal detector.
 - b. No less than two (2) Security Officers assigned to Circuit Court Lock-up.
 - c. One (1) Security Officer at the District Court Lock-up.
 - d. One (1) Security Officer stationed at the back hallway.
 - e. All other duties, as required.
3. When one (1) Security Officer works, he will remain at the metal detector until the arrival of the cleaning crew. Prior to 1630 hours, the Security Officer will unlock doors to various offices for the cleaning crew's entry. The cleaning crew's hours are 1700 to 2000 hours.
4. The general public will not normally enter the courthouse after 1630 hours, except by appointment. The Security Officer on duty will verify the appointment and escort the individual to the appropriate office.
5. If the Security Officer leaves the metal detector, notify the Duty Officer to monitor the camera at the Entrance.
6. Any person who enters the building after 1630 hours for an appointment, to include the cleaning crew, must sign in and out of the visitor's log book.
7. Any problems with the cleaning crew will be reported to the Crew Supervisor and a report will be made to the Security Supervisor.
8. Employees of the courthouse are permitted to re-enter the building for work unless otherwise directed. An escort from the courthouse to an employee's car after dark is available and may be provided by the HCSO Deputies on duty.

9. After the cleaning crew has left the courthouse, the Security Officer will make rounds in the building to secure all doors, ensure that lights are off and all areas are vacated unless authorized to remain in building. When securing offices, all appliances will be checked to ensure they are off. If any problems are detected, the Security Officer will contact the Duty Officer or Supervisor.
10. The Security Officer at the metal detector shall monitor outside cameras for the safety of employees and the public.

D. Metal Detector

1. One (1) Security Officer and one (1) Deputy are assigned to monitor the public as they enter the Courthouse.
2. DUTIES
 - a. Direct persons to the appropriate area of the Courthouse.
 - b. Examine all packages, purses, and briefcases for contraband weapons or unauthorized items.
 - 1) Unauthorized items are described as recording devices, cameras, etc. All unauthorized items will not be secured at the metal detector or by HCSO personnel.
 - 2) Weapons are described as guns, knives, long sewing needles, etc. that can be used to cause physical harm.
3. The HCSO will not secure any items of legal nature. Items must be taken from the Courthouse and will not be secured at the metal detector.
4. Items of an illegal nature will be seized and the Duty Officer or Supervisor will take required action.
5. Firearms
 - a. Police Officers are allowed to retain their weapons; however, Police Officers who are listed as defendants in criminal cases or have involvement with a civil case will secure their weapons in the lockbox at the Duty Officer location.⁵ Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Court Services Commander.
 - b. Police Officers not wearing their uniforms must have their Department identification badge displayed at all times.
6. Members of the public will pass through the metal detector without exception. Elected public officials and law enforcement officers are exempt from this provision while on official duty.
7. If the metal detector alarm is sounded, the individual will proceed through the metal detector again.
8. If the alarm continues to sound, the hand-held metal detector will be used to scan the individual.
9. The Security Officer will control the X-Ray machine and will look for contraband and unauthorized items of visitors and staff. All packages, etc. will be x-rayed. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.**

⁵ CALEA 73.3.1

E. Circuit Court Lock-up

1. Prisoners

- a. A minimum of two (2) Security Officers will be assigned to the lock-up.
- b. Security Officers will operate the security elevator. When not in use, the elevator will be secured at the lock-up area.
- c. While assigned to the lock-up area, the Security Officers will monitor all cameras and alarms.
- d. The Security Officers will maintain custody of all prisoners in the Circuit Court Lock-up.
- e. Security Officers are responsible for feeding all prisoners.
- f. Prisoners arrested on warrants will be processed.

2. Prisoner Return

- a. The Security Officers will transport all prisoners in the security elevator needed for court and will return prisoners to the lock-up area. High risk prisoners will be transferred by a HCSO Deputy.
- b. The Security Officers will coordinate the removal of the prisoners from the lock-up area back to the Howard County Detention Center and other agencies.
- c. All necessary paperwork for the transporting agency will accompany the deputy.

3. The Security Officers will inspect all lock-up area cells for damage and contraband, both prior to placing prisoners in them and after prisoner removal.

4. The Security Officer assigned to the lock-up, when available, will monitor surveillance cameras for the Circuit Courthouse and will report all suspicious activity to the Duty Officer or Supervisor.

F. Late Trials

1. During late trials, there will be a Security Officer assigned to the courtroom in session, the metal detector, and the back hallway.
2. The Security Officer must remain on duty until the conclusion of the trial. Overtime is authorized.
3. Jury members may be escorted to their cars by HCSO Deputies, if available.

G. Warrant Turn-Ins

1. When an individual turns him/herself in on a warrant or is brought to the HCSO by a bail bondsman on a warrant:
 - a. Verify that the warrant is active. The Duty Officer or a Warrants Deputy may be contacted to verify the warrant.
 - b. The Deputy working the evening shift will be notified to respond, process, and provide transportation to the Court Commissioner or committed to the Howard County Detention Center.

2. Two (2) Security Officers working: The prisoner will be taken to the lock-up, searched, and placed in a holding cell until the Deputy arrives.
3. One (1) Security Officer working: The prisoner will stay secured with the Duty Officer until a Deputy arrives.

III. SWORN PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Locking & Unlocking Courtrooms

1. Only the Courtroom that is being used or is in session for the day is to be unlocked.
2. The Deputy assigned to that Courtroom will enter the Court through the rear door.
3. A complete search of the Courtroom will be completed for weapons and contraband prior to the Courtroom being opened. When the search is completed, the Deputy will remain in the Courtroom.
4. The front door of the Courtroom will be unlocked thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of court for the public.
5. Official Court personnel may enter the Courtroom prior to the public.
6. The assigned Deputy shall remain in the Courtroom during breaks or at any point in time when the Courtroom is open.
7. Deputies must monitor the HCSO radio system at all times while in the Courtrooms.⁶
8. It is not necessary to lock the Courtrooms during normal breaks in the Court session. However, the assigned Deputy must remain in the Courtroom.
9. The Courtroom will be locked and secured for any breaks during the normal Court session that will last for an extended period of time and during which the Courtroom will be unoccupied.
10. The assigned Deputy will secure the Courtroom at the end of the day.

B. Prisoner Restraint & Searches

1. All prisoners will be restrained in accordance with General Order OPS-03, Prisoner Transport and OPS-02, Authorized Weapons.⁷
2. While in Courtrooms, leg irons will remain in place on the prisoner unless the judge orders them removed.⁸
3. New prisoners in the Circuit Court lock-up will be handcuffed and a frisk search will be conducted in the lock-up before the prisoner is placed in the security elevator.
 - a. The processing Deputy will perform an inventory search of the prisoner at the time of processing and prior to the prisoner's placement in a lock-up cell.⁹
 - b. An itemized inventory of all property taken from the prisoner will be completed by the processing Deputy or Security Officer.¹⁰

⁶ CALEA 73.4.2

⁷ CALEA 73.3.2

⁸ CALEA 73.3.2

⁹ CALEA 73.5.2 a

¹⁰ CALEA 73.5.2 b

- c. The HCSO will securely store any property taken from a prisoner in the Circuit Court lock-up.¹¹
4. In the event a prisoner proves to be violent or self-destructive, or demonstrates impairment due to drugs and/or alcohol, the HCSO will separate that prisoner from the other prisoners being held in the Circuit Court lock-up and will perform routine welfare checks of the segregated prisoner at fifteen (15) minute intervals.¹²

IV. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES IN LOCK-UP¹³

A. Non-Emergency Illness

1. If the prisoner is from the Howard County Detention Center, a Security Officer will contact an On-Duty Supervisor and advise him/her of the non-emergency illness.
2. If the prisoner is in the custody of an outside agency, a Security Officer will contact those officers, advise them of the situation, and request they respond immediately to the facility to provide the necessary care for their prisoner. An On-Duty Supervisor will document any actions taken by those officers.

B. Medical Emergency

1. The On-Duty Supervisor will contact the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (HCDFRS) and request they respond to the facility.
2. Deputies/Security Officers will render first aid until relieved by HCDFRS personnel.
3. The Duty Officer will immediately notify the Court Services Division Commander of the occurrence.
4. The Court Services Division Commander will immediately notify the Chief Deputy or the Sheriff, via the Chain of Command. Howard County Detention Center Administrators will also be advised of the transport.
5. Additionally, if the prisoner is in the custody of an outside agency, the Duty Officer will contact those officers and advise them of the situation and request they respond immediately to the Courthouse.
6. If hospitalization of a prisoner in the custody of the HCSO is required, the transport must be made in accordance with General Order OPS-17, Medical Prisoner Transport.
7. The On-Duty Supervisor will ensure that an Incident Report (HCSO 9014) is submitted before the end of his shift, detailing the facts and circumstances surrounding the medical emergency.

V. COURTROOM SECURITY AFTER HOURS

A. Security Post

1. The Judges Chamber Area is for AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY.
2. The Security Post located in front of the Judge's Chamber and across from the Jury Assembly Room Hall shall be manned from 8:30am until any later time as required by policy.

¹¹ CALEA 73.5.3

¹² CALEA 73.5.4

¹³ CALEA 73.5.5

3. The Security Officer assigned to the Security Post shall be responsible for controlling access to the Judge's Chamber hallway and the Law Library by allowing entry only to those with one (1) of the following identifications:
 - a. Circuit Courthouse Employee Identification Card
 - b. Maryland State Bar Association Identification Card
 - c. Visitor Pass, completed and issued by the Security Officer
4. Security Post Officer/Deputy will be responsible for conducting security rounds throughout the library when civilian visitors are permitted use.

B. Circuit Courthouse Employee ID Card

1. The Howard County Government issued identification card is utilized as the Circuit Courthouse Employee Identification Card. A laminated photograph identification card shall be issued by the Sheriff's Office to those employees in the Circuit Court who are not issued a County ID (i.e., Clerk's Office, Register of Wills, and Law Clerk interns who will be working in the Courthouse).
2. The ID card must be worn on the outer garment and be visible while the person is in the Courthouse.

C. Visitor Passes

1. Any person desiring access to the Law Library who does not have appropriate identification as outlined in Section B above, shall relinquish their driver's license and receive a visitor's pass. When departing, both documents will be returned.
2. A Log at the Security Area post will be maintained to document visitors to the Judge's Chambers and the Law Library.
3. If any person refuses to comply with the identification procedures, they will be denied access and a supervisor will be notified.

VI. ALARMS

- A. The Courthouse is equipped with door and panic alarms.¹⁴
 - a. DOOR ALARMS
 - a. Door alarms activate at emergency exits. These alarms are audible and may be reset with a key. When a door alarm sounds, a Deputy/Security Officer will respond to check the alarm and reset it.
 - b. COURTROOMS & JUDGES' CHAMBERS¹⁵
 - a. Alarms are monitored at the Duty Officer's desk, the Metal Detector, the Lock-Up, and the back hallway desks.
 - b. If the panic alarm is activated, the Duty Officer will be notified that the alarm has been activated and of the location.
 - c. Deputies will immediately respond to investigate the reason for the alarm activation.

¹⁴ CALEA 73.4.3

¹⁵ CALEA 73.4.3

- d. If the alarm is found to be false, the Security Officer or Deputy will respond to reset the alarm. Reset keys are located at the metal detector, back hallway desk, Duty Officer location, and with Security Officers.
- B. All alarms are to be tested at least once a month to ensure that they are working properly. If any problems occur, the Security Officer Supervisor will be immediately notified for repairs.

VII. CANCELLATION

This General Order cancels and replaces *General Order OPS-19 Court Security*, effective August 24, 2010.

Authority:

James F. Fitzgerald
Sheriff