



SECURITY SCREENING PROCEDURES

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OBJECTIVE

To Provide Court Security Officers with guidelines on security screening to deter, detect and prevent the entry of weapons and/or contraband into a court facility.

PURPOSE

New Hampshire RSA 159:19 Courthouse Security states that no person shall knowingly carry a loaded or unloaded pistol, revolver, or firearm or other deadly weapon as defines in RSA 625:11, V, whether open or concealed or whether licensed or unlicensed, upon the person or within any of the person's possessions owned or within the person's control in a courtroom or area used by the court. As such, security screening operations utilizing both walk-through and hand-held magnetometers in order to ensure the safety and security of all individuals who visit and work in New Hampshire court facilities.

TESTING

Prior to the start of each day, Court Security Officers shall verify that walk-through and hand-held magnetometers are functioning as intended. If a magnetometer appears to be malfunctioning, do not attempt to rectify the problem. Contact the Administrative Office of the Courts Security Manager immediately so a service call can be initiated.

SCREENING PROCEDURE

All individuals entering the courthouse must pass through security screening. The Court Security Officer will:

1. Provide the visitor with the greeting of the day (example: Good afternoon sir/mam).
2. Request to inspect any hand carried item such as a purse, bag or briefcase.
3. Visually inspect the contents of the hand carried item to ensure no weapons or contraband is present.
4. If there are no weapons or contraband present, pass the hand carried item along for later retrieval.

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5. Request the individual to surrender any metal objects on his/her person into the tray.
6. Once all metal objects have been surrendered into the tray, the Court Security Officer must inspect the contents to ensure no weapons or contraband are present.
7. Request that the individual pass through the walk-through magnetometer.
8. If there is no alarm, allow the individual to gather their belongings and proceed with their business.
9. If the alarm sounds, the Court Security Officer will conduct a hand-held magnetometer search of the individual to pinpoint any metal objects present. The individual will be directed to remove the item(s) that caused the alarm for inspection. Once the Court Security Officer is satisfied that there are no other alarms, the Court Security Officer will allow the individual to gather their belongings and proceed with their business.
10. In the event that an individual causes alarms during the walk-through and hand-held metal detectors, and is not cognizant of what caused those alarms, or if an individual indicates they have a medical device that would prohibit them from a magnetometer search, a Court Security Officer may perform a physical pat down search of the individual to ensure the individual doesn't possess any weapons or contraband. During such pat down searches, Court Security Officers should try to perform these searches in the presence of another Court Security Officer and/or in view of a security camera. In the event that a Court Security Officer has to pat down an individual of the opposite sex, the Court Security Officer shall have another Court Security Officer present or a member of the court staff present to witness the search.

GENERAL

Security screening involves the operation of security systems/equipment and enforcement of policies and procedures primarily designed to deter, detect and prevent weapons and contraband from entering the courthouse. All Court Security Officers assigned to the security screening station will be trained on specific screening aspects. To counter fatigue and complacency, Court Security Officers shall rotate accordingly.

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- Consistent with our mission to deter, detect and prevent weapons and contraband from entering the courthouse, we must provide a reasonable assistance to those who enter the courthouse for the first time with apprehension. A welcoming Court Security Officer reduces the risk of dangerous conduct by unstable constituents and supports the goal of improving customer service.
- Court Security Officers must be professional, courteous and helpful at all times.
- Eating, drinking, smoking or reading books, magazines or newspapers are not authorized in the screening area.
- Screening equipment will not be used as foot rests, to lean/sit on, or as shelving.
- Court Security Officers should not embarrass individuals being screened by requesting that they remove articles of clothing, belts or shoes during the screening process. Court Security Officers should provide reasonable privacy to any individual when a more thorough screening is required.
- Court Security Officers will pay particular attention to large belt buckles, as some of these buckles may contain or conceal dangerous weapons such as firearms and knives.
- Court Security Officers should not assume that shoes or boots are setting off the magnetometer. The hand-held magnetometer should be utilized to isolate and identify the metal part of a shoe or boot.

VISITOR'S RIGHTS

It is important that all Court Security Officers understand that all individuals have certain rights pertaining to the screening process. They are:

- The right to refuse screening;
- The right to be screened in private when security concerns require that items of clothing be adjusted or that a more thorough screening be conducted;
- The right to refuse the inspection of their hand-carried items;

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- The right to withdraw permission for the screening of themselves and/or their hand-carried items at any time, unless an obvious threat has been identified.

Individuals who refuse to submit to security screening will not be allowed to enter the courthouse.

SPECIAL SCREENING

In the case of an inconclusive machine scan, a limited hand search of an individual may be utilized for the purpose of locating possible weapons or explosives.

Wheelchairs, strollers, crutches, canes, casts and children are examples of ploys to get dangerous weapons and explosives into a courthouse. Court Security Officers must be alert to these situations, use reasonable efforts and maintain diplomacy while being thorough in the screening process. Court Security Officers must be aware of individuals with pacemakers or external medical devices.

A pacemaker is a battery-operated device that assists the heart beat in a regular rhythm. Some are permanent (internal) and some are temporary (external). Studies have shown that magnetometers have no adverse effects on cardiac pacemakers or other external devices. In fact, some external medical devices could have a temporary negative effect on magnetometers. Medical devices such as insulin pumps or bone growth stimulators operate with the same energy pattern used by most magnetometers thus issuing an alarm when the device is nearby and rendering the magnetometer temporarily inoperable.

Individuals with such medical devices usually carry identification cards to indicate their medical necessities. Court Security Officers will be professional at all times and maintain the individual's privacy during screening. Individuals with a medical condition (e.g. pacemakers, other external medical devices, and pregnancies) may bypass the walk-through magnetometer but will be subjected to hand-held magnetometer screening.

When hand-held magnetometer screening of an individual is necessary, do not hold the hand-held magnetometer near the device any longer than is necessary.

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SCREENING OF PACKAGES

All hand carried items including briefcases, packages, handbags and backpacks shall be examined by Court Security Officers to ensure that they do not contain weapons, contraband, food, drink or any other unauthorized items. At no time shall a Court Security Officer read personal or privileged files during screening. Individuals who refuse to comply with this portion of the screening will not be able to bring their items into the courthouse.

FLOUROSCOPES (X-RAY MACHINES)

Court Security Officers assigned to the fluoroscope must be familiar with general operation and adhere to the safety requirements of the equipment. Prior to the start of each day, Court Security Officers shall verify that the fluoroscope is functioning properly. If the fluoroscope fails, Court Security Officers must not attempt to fix or otherwise dismantle the machine. The Security Manager must be contacted to arrange for authorized service personnel to repair the machine.

Court Security Officers are not to comment about dangerous radiation levels being emitted from fluoroscopes. Such comments only serve to mislead the public and employees. Radiation safety levels on screening systems are tested twice a year to ensure they exceed all state requirements. Court Security Officers will not allow any individual to insert any part of their body into the fluoroscope at any time.

There is a false impression that the fluoroscope can damage or corrupt film, videotape, electronic devices and computer disks. (The only film that can be damaged is high speed film exceeding ASA 1000 and x-ray or scientific film.) If necessary, these items may be inspected by hand.

1. Prior to inspection, the Court Security Officer should ask the property owner if he/she is aware of any questionable contents in the item being inspected.
2. Direct the individual to place any hand carried item large enough to conceal a weapon, explosive device or other restricted article on the fluoroscope.
3. If inspection reveals the presence of a questionable object, the Court Security Officer will remove the item from the machine for a hand search.
4. If any weapons, contraband or other restricted items are found, they should be handled accordingly.

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HANDLING DANGEROUS WEAPONS/DRUGS

The security screening of individuals should not be limited to locating metal objects only. All weapons or other dangerous or harmful objects discovered during screening will be confiscated or held for return to the individual upon leaving the courthouse.

If Court Security Officers discover illegal drugs or other contraband, the Court Security Officer should detain the individual(s) and notify local law enforcement.

Section II of New Hampshire RSA 159:19 states that firearms may be secured at the entrance of a courthouse by courthouse security personnel. Although there is no statutory mandate, Court Security Officers may secure firearms that are surrendered for safekeeping at security screening areas by individuals seeking to enter the courthouse.

RECEIVING WEAPONS AT THE SECURITY SCREENING AREA

Any individual who possesses a firearm will not be permitted to enter the courthouse unless:

- A. the individual decides to leave the premises and return without the firearm in possession;
- B. the individual surrenders the firearm to the Court Security Officer for safekeeping:
 1. The CSO will escort the individual to the location of the lockbox.
 2. The CSO will direct the individual to:
 - a. Remove his/her holster containing the firearm keeping his/her fiaway from the trigger housing area;
 - b. Engage the safety mechanism (if applicable);
 - c. Place the firearm into the lockbox for safekeeping.

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3. The CSO will keep the key to the lockbox.

During the time that the individual with the firearm is in the courthouse, the Court Security Officer will call the:

Administrative Office of the Courts
Security Manager's Office at:
Extension 0305 or (603) 415-0679

to determine if any court proceedings (such as the issuance of a domestic violence restraining order, wants or warrants) are in existence, which would prevent the individual from possessing a firearm or other deadly weapon. If the court issued such an order, or if it is discovered that an outstanding protective order, want or warrant on the individual, the Court Security Officer shall not return the firearm to the individual, and local law enforcement will be notified immediately.

Additionally, the Court Security Officer must be alert to the possibility of the individual becoming disruptive or agitated while conducting business with the court. If, in the judgment of the Court Security Officer, the return of the firearm would create a risk to public safety, the firearm shall be retained in safe storage, and local law enforcement will be notified immediately. The retention of the weapon under the above circumstances will be reported to the Security Manager immediately.

NON-METALLIC WEAPONS

Court Security Officers must understand that not all weapons are made of metal and will not activate the walk-through metal detector. Non-Metallic blades present just as much of a risk as they can be just as sharp, hard, and deadly as a metal blade.

EMPLOYEE SCREENING

All judicial branch employees entering through the main courthouse entrance who are not known to the Court Security Officer shall be required to show their judicial branch issued employee identification card. Once done and verified, the employee may pass through security screening without being security screened. In the event that an employee is not in possession of their judicial branch issued employee identification card, the employee will be subjected to security screening before entering the courthouse. Employees shall not be subjected to security screening when entering the building through any other entrance.

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POLICE OFFICERS IN COURT

Section I of NH RSA 159:19, Courthouse Security, states that:

No person shall knowingly carry a loaded or unloaded pistol, revolver, or firearm or any other deadly weapon as defined in RSA 625:11, V, whether open or concealed or whether licensed or unlicensed, upon the person or within any of the person's possessions owned or within the person's control in a courtroom or area used by a court. Whoever violates the provisions of this paragraph shall be guilty of a class B felony.

Section IV of NH RSA 159:19, Courthouse Security, states that:

IV. The provisions of this section shall not apply to marshals, sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, police or other duly appointed or elected law enforcement officers, bailiffs and court security officers, or persons with prior authorization of the court for the purpose of introducing weapons into evidence and as otherwise provided for in RSA 159:5.

Court Security Officer shall adhere to the following guidelines whenever dealing with law enforcement entities seeking to enter the courthouse:

1. Any on-duty uniformed or plain clothed marshal, sheriff, deputy sheriff, police or other duly appointed or elected law enforcement officer, bailiff and/or court security officer wishing to enter into the courthouse for official business with a firearm may be permitted to enter and be permitted to keep their firearm.
2. Any off-duty uniformed or plain clothed marshal, sheriff, deputy sheriff, police or other duly appointed or elected law enforcement officer, bailiff and/or court security officer wishing to enter into the courthouse for official business with a firearm may be permitted to enter and be permitted to keep their firearm.
3. Any off-duty uniformed or plain clothed marshal, sheriff, deputy sheriff, police or other duly appointed or elected law enforcement officer, bailiff and/or court security officer wishing to enter the courthouse for personal business with a firearm may be permitted to enter after their firearm is surrendered for safe-keeping. Court Security Officers shall follow the steps outlined in the Handling Dangerous Weapons/Drugs section of this policy.

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WEAPONS LOGS AND RECEIPTS

Court Security Officers will utilize property tags and weapon logs to track weapons and other items that are obtained during the screening process. All items taken must be safeguarded until proper disposition is made. Weapon logs will be sent to the Security Manager on a monthly basis. Court Security Officers will turn in all confiscated or abandoned items annually to the Security Manager for proper disposal.

LIST OF PROHIBITED ITEMS

The following is a list of general items that are prohibited from entering the courthouse. These items listed shall be held at the security desk and returned to the owner upon leaving the courthouse:

Firearms/ Ammunition (provided they meet the provisions set forth in the RECEIVING WEAPONS AT THE SECURITY SCREENING AREA section of this procedure)

Knives or swords
Razors
Scissors
Large Safety Pins
Knitting Needles
Handcuff Keys
Mace/Pepper Spray
Large D-Rings
Screwdrivers

Any other item that the Court Security Officer deems a threat to public safety.

REPORTING

All security screening incidents that are a result of disruptive activity, property damage, personal injury, weapons confiscation, and/or arrest, must be immediately reported to the Court Security Supervisor and the Security Manager. A written report detailing the incident must be forwarded to the Security Manager within five business days.

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1	Initial Release	AOC Director	4/4/2014
2	Reissue with changes	AOC Director	4/25/2014
3	Purpose statute language added. Pat down language in Screening Procedures section added. Language to modify the procedure outlined in the Receiving Weapons at the Security Screening Area section. Non-Metallic Weapons section added. Employee Screening section added. List of Prohibited items section added.	AOC Director	5/25/2018

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