

CHANGES TO COURTHOUSE SECURITY EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2, 2018 OR LATER

For the last 18 months, the Kitsap County Courthouse Security Committee has been reviewing security improvements to the County Court House. This review is mandated by the new Supreme Court Rule GR 36. Pursuant to this new rule, the Courts are required to work toward creating a safe courthouse environment to ensure the administration of justice for employees and the public alike.

As a result of the review, the following changes to Courthouse entrances were made **effective January 2nd, 2018**.

- **100% screening** for all patrons entering the county courthouse from Division Street. Screening will apply to all employees, attorneys, and elected officials.
- Contractors coming into the Courthouse to perform repairs that require tools or equipment must go through screening at the Division Street door and met by either Facilities staff or the County department responsible for the repair request. Contractors with oversized equipment or large vendor deliveries shall make prior arrangements with Security for access through the Southside doors.

The following changes are anticipated to be effective February 1, 2019 or later. Notice of implementation will be provided to effected staff.

- The Southwest door (commonly accessed by employees from the Prosecutor's Office and IT) will be **closed** to routine ingress and egress. The door will revert to an emergency exit only and will be alarmed if opened. [See Joint Administrative Order, signed Dec. 17, 2018].
- The Southeast door (nearest OPD and the jail) will be key-card access required for **both ingress and egress**. Exiting through this door without a keycard will activate an alarm.
- Private and contract attorneys may obtain a county issued keycard which will permit them to use the Southeast door. Keycards can be obtained for a fee through the Sheriff's Department.
- Anyone entering via the Southeast door may be required to **display their County ID** before being allowed to enter the building by security or other employees.
- Employees bringing in friends and family who are not county employees into the Courthouse will be required to use the Division Street entrance.
- Under special circumstances (such as bringing in a witness for sensitive cases) a person without County ID may be brought through the Southeast or Southwest door if a prior arrangement has been made with Security for individual screening.

In conjunction with the above changes, the Security Committee is asking for your help to ensure courthouse safety.

1. ALWAYS WEAR YOUR COUNTY IDENTIFICATION BADGE IN A VISIBLE LOCATION WHEN IN THE COURTHOUSE!
2. When entering the courthouse facility at points other than the main entrance, **DO NOT** allow others into the building with you or behind you that do not have valid county identification on their person! **This includes friends and family of County staff.**
3. Leave all prohibited items at home or in your vehicle. If you are not sure about an item, contact court security and ask them!

4. If you see something suspicious or out of the ordinary -- please tell a court security officer so they can investigate.
5. Coordinate with court security if you have someone coming to the Courthouse with special equipment (e.g. elevator or copy repair persons), or who need special accommodations through the Southside doors.
6. **Violation of these rules may result in the revocation of the privilege to enter through the employee door.**

We appreciate that these changes will require a change in routine and a bit of inconvenience, and the following FAQs were designed to help explain the reasoning behind modifications.

Thank you all for your help to make Kitsap County and the Kitsap County Courthouse a safe and enjoyable place to live, work and do business.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is it necessary to screen?

A. The tragic events that are happening around our nation and the world have helped to highlight and reinforce the need for all of us to work together to make our courthouse campus a safe and secure place to work and do business. If staff or attorneys bring weapons into the courthouse they may become accessible to the public.

Did you know:

- Through the end of June 2017 nearly **120,000** people have visited the Kitsap County courthouse,
- During the screening process of these citizens and employees, your court security team has located and removed
 - 48 Handguns
 - 2235 Knives
 - 133 cans of pepper spray
- In addition to the above items, officers have confiscated 10 ILLEGAL DANGEROUS WEAPONS from patrons. In these cases, a report was forwarded to the prosecutor's office for criminal charges.

Your court security team does have LIMITED storage capacity for patrons to leave LEGAL but prohibited items at their station when entering the courthouse facility. However, the BEST solution is to secure these items in your vehicle or simply leave them home when coming to the courthouse.

Q. Why are the changes being made to the southeast and southwest doors?

A. While the policy of permitting unscreened access for staff is more convenient and less costly, it has created a number of security breaches. For example, on a number of occasions non-staff have propped open the Southside doors to enable non-county employees to exit the building to smoke and re-enter afterwards. This allowed for access to other non-employees and created the opportunity for

the introduction of weapons/contraband into the Courthouse. In another unfortunate example, a witness for a trial was permitted to enter through the back door with a family member. The family member was in the Courthouse with a large knife on her person during a trial on a serious felony. In a final example, a person repairing equipment left his tool box containing potential weapons in a public area.

Q. Under what authority are the courts required to make security plans?

A. Both Revised Code of Washington (RCW) as well as Washington State Court Rules place requirements on courts to establish security protocol both for the safety of the employees and the public. The following are ***abbreviated excerpts*** from the RCW and Court Rules. For complete versions of each, visit;

RCW:

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=9.41.300>

Court Rules:

http://www.courts.wa.gov/court_rules/?fa=court_rules.display&group=ga&set=GR&ruleid=GAGR36

RCW 9.41.300 states (in part);

1. It is unlawful for any person to enter the following places when he or she knowingly possesses or knowingly has under his or her control a weapon:

b.) Those areas in any building which are used in connection with court proceedings, including courtrooms, jury rooms, judge's chambers, offices and areas used to conduct court business, waiting areas, and corridors adjacent to areas used in connection with court proceedings...

For purposes of this subsection (1)(b), "weapon" means any firearm, explosive as defined in RCW 70.74.010, or any weapon of the kind usually known as sling shot, sand club, or metal knuckles, or any knife, dagger, dirk, or other similar weapon that is capable of causing death or bodily injury and is commonly used with the intent to cause death or bodily injury.

General Court Rule 36 states (in part);

d. Court Security Committee

1. Each trial court should form a Court Security Committee to coordinate the adoption of court security policies and make recommendations regarding security protocols, policies, and procedures necessary to protect the public, court personnel and users, and court facilities. The Court Security Committee should adopt a Court Security Plan and thereafter revise the Plan as may be necessary.

Such a committee has been established and meets regularly to discuss court security issues and make recommendations for policies and procedures to ensure courthouse security.

g. Minimum Court Security Standards.

Every Court shall endeavor to meet or exceed the following minimum standards. Should the Court fail to meet the Minimum Court Security Standards, the Court should state in the Court Security Plan why the minimum standards were not met.

(2) Weapons screening by uniformed security personnel at all public entrances. Uniformed security personnel shall perform weapons screening at all public entrances, using as a minimum metal-detector wand screening and physical examination of bags, briefcases, packages, etc.

Q. Who is on the Court Security Committee?

A. Representation from the law and justice departments and County Administration. Staff from the Superior and District Court, Clerks Office, Prosecutor's Office, Sheriff's Department, Office of Public Defense, Court Security, Information Services, Facilities and County administration.

Q. How does a private attorney obtain a badge?

A. Contact the KCBA or the Sheriff's Office for an application. Similar to the Pierce County program, attorneys will be required to complete an application and pay a fee to be determined to obtain a badge. The badge will allow the attorney to use the keypad to enter the Southeast door of the courthouse.

Q. If a private attorney has a badge and comes to court with a client, will the client be allowed to skip security screening?

A. No. The client will not be allowed to by-pass the screening at the main entrance. Similarly, clients may not accompany an attorney who has a badge through the Southeast door. The client must enter through the Division Street entrance and be subject to screening by court security.

Q. Who do I contact to make arrangements for a delivery or entry by a contractor with special equipment?

A. Contact court security at 337-7777.