

# ECTOR COUNTY COURTHOUSE SECURITY

## GENERAL ORDER

### **PURPOSE**

The Courthouse Security Department of Ector County is dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment both in and around the Ector County Courthouse for visitors and county employees.

### **POLICY**

The primary responsibility of the Courthouse Security Department is the safety and security of the courts, facilities, employees and visitors to this building. Courthouse Security involves keeping dangerous weapons and hazardous items and contraband from the buildings and grounds. To accomplish this goal Courthouse Security employees will conduct searches of the building, grounds, persons and other objects to detect potential weapons, contraband, evidence, hazards, stolen property and any other item that is unnecessary for the normal conduct of county business that could possible be a threat.

### **DEFINITION**

Courthouse facility is defined as the Ector County Courthouse.

### **SECURITY POLICIES**

#### **I. FIREARMS**

Firearms **will not** be permitted within the secured area of the courthouse including:

- A. Concealed license holders from all states and territories.

#### Exceptions

1. By specific approval of the Ector County Courthouse Security Department
2. Peace Officers performing official duties including duties involving a prisoner, hostile witness or mental patient. Officers performing these duties will only be admitted after proper identification by Courthouse Security Department Officers; or,
3. Firearms which are evidence in a trial will be admitted after notification to the Courthouse Security Department, and establishment of the safe status of the weapon.
4. Courthouse Security Deputies and Department Head.
5. Plain clothes peace officers shall be identified by means of a colored tag issued by Courthouse Security.

## **II. EXPLOSIVE / INCENDIARY DEVICES OR WEAPONS**

Explosive / Incendiary devices or weapons will not be permitted within the secured are of the Courthouse.

Exceptions

1. By specific approval of Ector County Courthouse Security Department; or,
2. Explosives / explosive devices that are to be introduced as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification of the Court House Security Department.

## **III. EDGED WEAPONS**

Edged weapons including but not limited to knives, scissors, ice picks and letter openers will not be permitted within the secured area of the courthouse.

Exceptions

1. By specific approval of the Ector County Courthouse Security Department; or,
2. Edged weapons that are to be introduced, as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification of the Courthouse Security Department.
3. Office supplies for employees of the courthouse.

## **IV. CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

Chemical weapons will not be permitted within the secured area of the Courthouse including:

- A. All types of mace, pepper spray or any other device designated to emit a debilitating chemical.

Exceptions

1. By specific approval of Ector County Courthouse Security Department; or,
2. Any peace officer performing official duties including duties involving a prisoner, hostile witness or mental patient. Officers performing these duties will only be admitted after proper identification by Courthouse Security personnel or,
3. Chemical weapons that are to be introduced as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification from the Courthouse Security Department.

## **V. CLUBS / STRIKING WEAPONS**

Clubs / Striking Weapons will not be permitted within the secured area of the courthouse.

Exceptions

1. By specific approval of Ector County Courthouse Security Department; or,
2. Any peace officer performing official duties including duties involving a prisoner, hostile witness or mental patient. Officers performing these duties will be admitted after proper identification by Courthouse Security personnel or,
3. Clubs/striking weapons that are to be introduced as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification of the Courthouse Security Department.

## VI. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials **will not** be permitted within the secured area of the Courthouse including but not limited to:

- A. All types of organic/in-organic corrosives, non corrosives, inhalants, or chemicals that are intended or could be used to inflict harm to humans or property.
- B. Any animals or reptile intended or could be used to inflict harm to humans or property.

Exceptions

- 1. By specific approval of Ector County Courthouse Security Department; or,
- 2. Hazardous materials being used for maintenance/cleaning inside the secured areas of the Courthouse or,
- 4. Any hazardous materials to be introduced, as evidence in a pending trial will be admitted after notification of the Courthouse Security Department.

## VII. EMERGENCY / UNFORESEEN SITUATIONS

The Ector County Courthouse Security Department will initiate any and all necessary actions to insure a safe and secure environment.

## VIII. FACILITIES ENTRY

A. Courthouse employees will enter and exit the Courthouse through the East entrance by utilizing their access cards. (The Ector County Courthouse currently utilizes an I.D. scan pad system for employee entry). Employees must have identification badges displayed in a visible manner to allow Courthouse Security personnel to identify that employee.

- 1. All Courthouse employees must enter the Courthouse utilizing their access card.
    - a. Exception: The Ector County Courthouse Security Department may allow Courthouse employees to enter or exit through the Southwest entrance under extenuating circumstances.
  - 2. Employees will be allowed to exit the building through the Southwest entrance after 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and on the weekend.
- B. All persons (excluding Courthouse personnel referenced in paragraph "A") will enter / exit the Courthouse through the Southwest entrance.
  - C. Anyone without county identification will not be allowed access into the Courthouse other than normal business hours.
  - D. All persons (excluding Courthouse employees referred to in paragraph "A".) entering the Courthouse during normal business hours will be screened/searched for weapons. Any person not wanting to utilize the convenience of walkthrough metal detectors and x-ray machines may be individually searched by visual observation and handheld metal detector.
  - E. **Employees using an access card to enter the courthouse will be required to prohibit any access other than their own.** If any employee observes any unauthorized access they must notify security at once.

Exceptions

- 1. An employee may allow access to another Courthouse employee.

2. An employee who is escorting their minor child or spouse into the building may allow the minor child or spouse to accompany the employee through the East entrance.
- F. All electronic access cards to the Courthouse facilities will be authorized by the Courthouse Security Department Head. No other county employee will make or issue these access cards.
  - G. Accommodations will be made for any person with a handicap or disability by Courthouse Security personnel. Employees presenting a medical excuse will be allowed accommodations as recommended.

#### **IX. VIOLATION**

- A. No person will be allowed unauthorized access into the Courthouse. Persons gaining unauthorized access will be escorted from the facility, and if conditions warrant, arrested.

- B. Employee violations of Courthouse Security policy:

First Violation – the employee's Department Head or Elected Official will be presented with a notice of violation for the employee who violated the policy. The notice will advise the Department Head / Elected Official of the time and date of the violation, as well as the infraction committed.

Second violation – The offending employee's Access card will be de-activated for 30 days. The employee's Department Head / will be responsible for opening the Employee Entrance / Exit for the employee each day during the deactivation period.

Third Violation – The offending employee's Access card will be deactivated permanently. The employee's Department Head / Elected Official will be responsible for opening the Employee Entrance / Exit for the employee to gain access to or leave the Courthouse.

#### **X. INCLUSION CLAUSE**

Any issue not expressly referenced herein will be addressed at the discretion of Courthouse Security Department Head.

**THIS POLICY WAS APPROVED WITH A 4 -0 VOTE BY THE ECTOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S COURT ON MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2008.**

**THIS POLICY IS EFFECTIVE AS OF MARCH 24, 2008.**