

In the Iowa Supreme Court

In the Matter of Weapons in Court-Controlled Spaces	Supervisory Order
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On June 19, 2017, December 19, 2017, and June 28, 2024, this court entered supervisory orders governing weapons in court-controlled spaces. In our most recent order dated June 28, 2024, we mentioned our intent to conduct additional study of this topic. We also mentioned that we may issue additional orders related to this topic.

Following study and reflection, we now enter this supervisory order, which supersedes our prior orders of June 19, 2017, December 19, 2017, and June 28, 2024.

1. Except as provided in this order, weapons are prohibited in court-controlled spaces. “Court-controlled spaces” means (a) courthouses used only for judicial branch functions, and (b) courtrooms and court offices in any county courthouse or joint-use public facility. “Weapons” includes firearms, knives, and chemical agents such as mace or pepper spray.

2. The prohibition stated in paragraph 1, above (hereinafter “the prohibition”) does not apply to any peace officer while engaged in the performance of official duties.

3. The prohibition does not apply to any peace officer, county attorney, or assistant county attorney who holds a valid professional weapons permit issued pursuant to Iowa Code section 724.6.

4. The prohibition does not apply to any judicial branch employee who has been designated as a security officer by the state court administrator.

5. The prohibition does not prevent any contractor or judicial branch employee who performs facilities-related duties from possessing knives and knife-like tools that are necessary for their work.

6. The prohibition does not apply to any judicial officer to the extent permitted in paragraphs 7 through 18, below. “Judicial officer” has the same meaning as in Iowa Code section 602.1101.

The purpose of this exception is to provide judicial officers with additional options for personal protection. The counties hold primary responsibility for security in county courthouses. Nothing about this order is intended to encroach on the authority or responsibility of any sheriff or other law enforcement agency or peace officer.

7. Subject to the provisions of this order, any judicial officer may possess within court controlled-spaces (1) small knives or multi-tools (like Swiss Army-type or Leatherman-type tools) provided that any knife blade may not exceed 5 inches in length, except for kitchen knives and utensils for purposes of food preparation and service; and (2) small chemical agent canisters for personal safety purposes.

8. Subject to the provisions of this order, any judicial officer may possess any other weapon upon receiving written authorization from the state court administrator. Authorization to possess a weapon other than a handgun will be given only upon a showing of good cause and subject to any specific limitations imposed by the state court administrator. “Handgun” includes revolvers and pistols.

9. The permissions provided in paragraphs 7 and 8, above, only apply to judicial officers acting within the scope of their employment as judicial officers. Any judicial officer who is participating in or attending a court proceeding outside the scope of their employment—whether as a party, witness, victim, juror, attorney or other interested person—is not permitted to bring any weapon into any court-controlled space.

10. A judicial officer must comply with the requirements of this order and must receive written authorization from the state court administrator prior to bringing a handgun into any court-controlled space.

11. A judicial officer may apply for authorization by delivering a properly completed application to the state court administrator. A properly completed application should be substantially identical in form to the blank application attached to this order as Exhibit A and must include:

- a. Proper documentation that the judicial officer holds a valid nonprofessional weapons permit issued pursuant to Iowa Code section 724.7. A copy of the permit constitutes proper documentation.
- b. A certification that the judicial officer has demonstrated knowledge of firearm safety. A judicial officer must demonstrate such knowledge by completing any of the training options identified in Iowa Code section 724.9(1)(a) through (f) during the twelve month period immediately prior to the date of the application. Provided, however, that the training

must be conducted in person and must include a live fire component. The state court administrator may approve alternative methods of demonstrating knowledge of firearm safety if good cause is shown.

c. Proper documentation that the judicial officer has completed the training required by paragraph 11.b.

Proper documentation must be in one of the forms identified in Iowa Code section 724.9(4)(a), (b), or (d). Provided, however, that the documentation must show that the training was completed during the twelve month period immediately prior to the date of the application. The state court administrator may approve alternative forms of documentation if good cause is shown.

d. A certification that the judicial officer has timely notified their Chief Judge in writing of their intent to submit an application. Notification is timely if it is completed at least ten days prior to the judicial officer's delivery of the application to the state court administrator.

12. After receiving an application that complies with the requirements of this order, the state court administrator will issue written authorization to the judicial officer unless there is good cause to withhold authorization. The state court administrator may withdraw authorization at any time for good cause. Upon written request by a judicial officer, the supreme court may review any good-cause determination made pursuant to this order.

13. An authorization expires twelve months after it is issued. An authorization should state the date it was issued and the date it expires.

14. Judicial officers may apply for renewed authorizations by repeating the process described in paragraph 11, above, either before or after their current authorization expires. For renewal applications, however, the training requirements may be satisfied through a combination of (1) an internet-based course of instruction that meets the requirements of Iowa Code section 724.9(2); and (2) an in-person instructor-led course of live fire.

15. Identifying information of judicial officers who have notified their Chief Judge of their intent to request authorization, who have requested authorization, or who have been granted authorization under this order shall be deemed confidential under Iowa Code section 22.7(50).

16. The state court administrator will provide the names of authorized judicial officers to (1) the sheriffs who provide security for court locations at which those judicial officers serve and (2) the Iowa Department of Public Safety. The state court administrator will request that this information be kept confidential and be disseminated only to those law enforcement personnel who need to know that a judicial officer may be armed.

17. Judicial officers must keep handguns concealed while in courtrooms and other court-controlled spaces that are open to the public.

18. Judicial officers must keep handguns and ammunition secure at all times. At all times, handguns must be (1) secured in a

locked handgun safe or STOPBOX handgun retention device in the judge's chambers; (2) secured in the judicial officer's locked vehicle; or (3) carried securely by the judicial officer on his or her person using a level 2 (or higher) holster or an equivalent retention system that includes at least two restraints, e.g., friction plus a strap, zipper, lock, or other device.

19. If any peace officer responds to a law enforcement or court security incident within a court-controlled space and makes contact with an armed judicial officer, the judicial officer shall notify the peace officer as soon as safely practicable that the judicial officer is armed; if requested by the peace officer, the judicial officer shall surrender his or her handgun to the peace officer or comply with other lawful directions given by the peace officer.

Dated this 16th day of October, 2025.

The Iowa Supreme Court

By: _____

Susan Larson Christensen, Chief Justice

Application for Authorization to Carry Handgun
(Exhibit A to Supervisory Order dated October 16, 2025)

I, _____, hereby apply to the state court administrator for issuance of an authorization to carry a handgun in court-controlled spaces pursuant to and subject to the restrictions of the supervisory order issued by the Iowa Supreme Court on October 16, 2025. This application is for (check one):

_____ A first-time authorization
_____ A renewal of my authorization, which expires on _____.

In support of my application, I state the following under penalty of perjury and pursuant to the laws of the State of Iowa:

1. My full name is _____. I am employed as a judicial officer as defined in Iowa Code section 602.1101. My job title is: _____. I serve in District_____.

2. I hold a valid nonprofessional permit to carry weapons pursuant to Iowa Code section 724.7. **I have attached a photocopy of the permit.**

3. I completed one of the training courses identified in Iowa Code section 724.9(1)(a) through (f) in the past twelve months prior to the filing of this application. This training (check one):

_____ was entirely in-person and included an instructor-led course of live fire (required for first-time authorizations);
_____ consisted of (1) an internet program that complies with Iowa Code section 724.9(2) plus (2) an in-person instructor-led course of live fire (only available for renewals)

I completed this training on _____, 20____. **I have attached documentation** of this training.

4. I have read and I agree to the terms of the supervisory order issued by the Iowa Supreme Court on October 16, 2025, including without limitation the requirement to keep handguns and ammunition secure at all times as mandated in paragraph 18 of the order and the requirement to keep handguns concealed while in courtrooms and other court-controlled spaces that are open to the public as mandated in paragraph 17 of the order.

5. I notified Chief Judge _____ in writing of my intent to submit this application. My notification was timely because it was made ten (10) days prior to my submission of this application. My notification was made on _____, 20____.

I certify under penalty of perjury and pursuant to the laws of the state of Iowa that the preceding is true and correct.

Date

Signature