

COURT WATCH

• NOLA •

VISUAL REPORT

DISCONNECTED:

Mobile Phone Access in
Orleans Parish
Criminal District Court

2024

DISCONNECTED: A VISUAL REPORT

In the top 50 cities for violent crime, only 2 courts don't allow people to enter with cell phones:

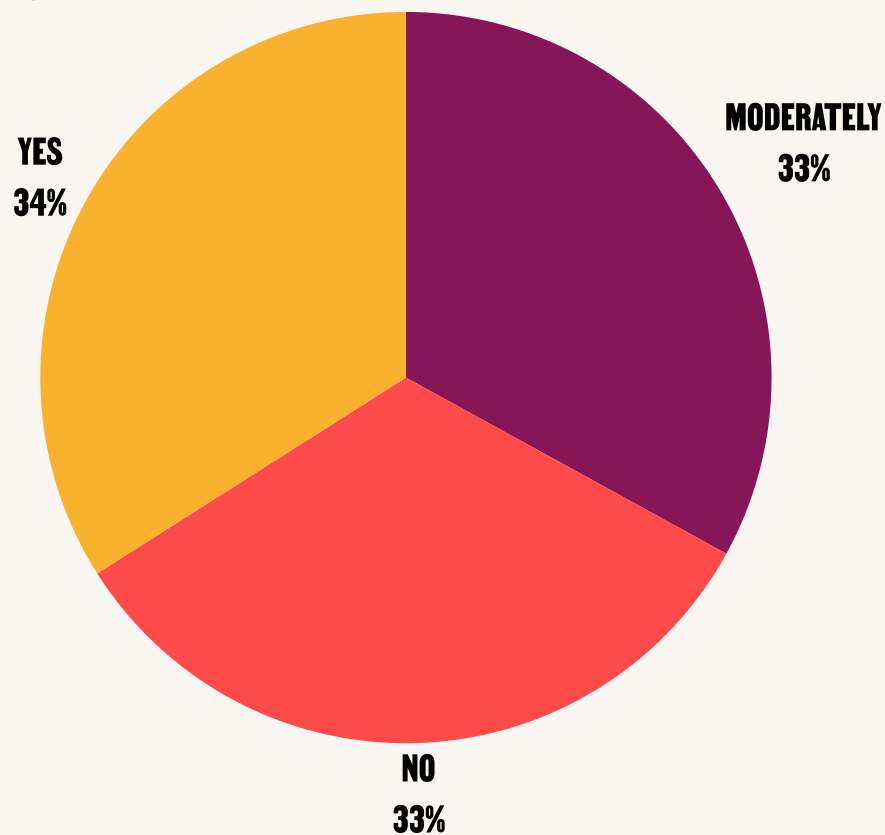
Albuquerque and **New Orleans.**

CELL PHONES ALLOWED IN COURTHOUSE				
St. Louis*	Detroit	Baltimore	Kansas City	Milwaukee
Cleveland	Stockton	Oakland	San Bernardino	Anchorage
Nashville	Minneapolis	Houston	Tulsa	Baton Rouge
Wichita	Buffalo	Las Vegas	Washington, D.C.	Philadelphia
Atlanta	Newark	Tucson	Oklahoma City	Dallas
Los Angeles	Phoenix	Orlando	Mobile	Miami
San Francisco	San Antonio	Corpus Christi	Denver	Sacramento
Reno	Des Moines	Long Beach	St. Paul	Omaha
Cincinnati	Indianapolis	Louisville	Pittsburgh	St. Petersburg
Chicago*	Boston	Memphis	*MUST BE STORED IN LOCKER	
CELL PHONES PROHIBITED IN COURTHOUSE				
New Orleans		Albuquerque		

67% of the courthouse visitors Court Watch NOLA surveyed said that not being able to bring their phone made it more difficult to attend court.

DID NOT HAVING YOUR PHONE MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO ATTEND COURT?

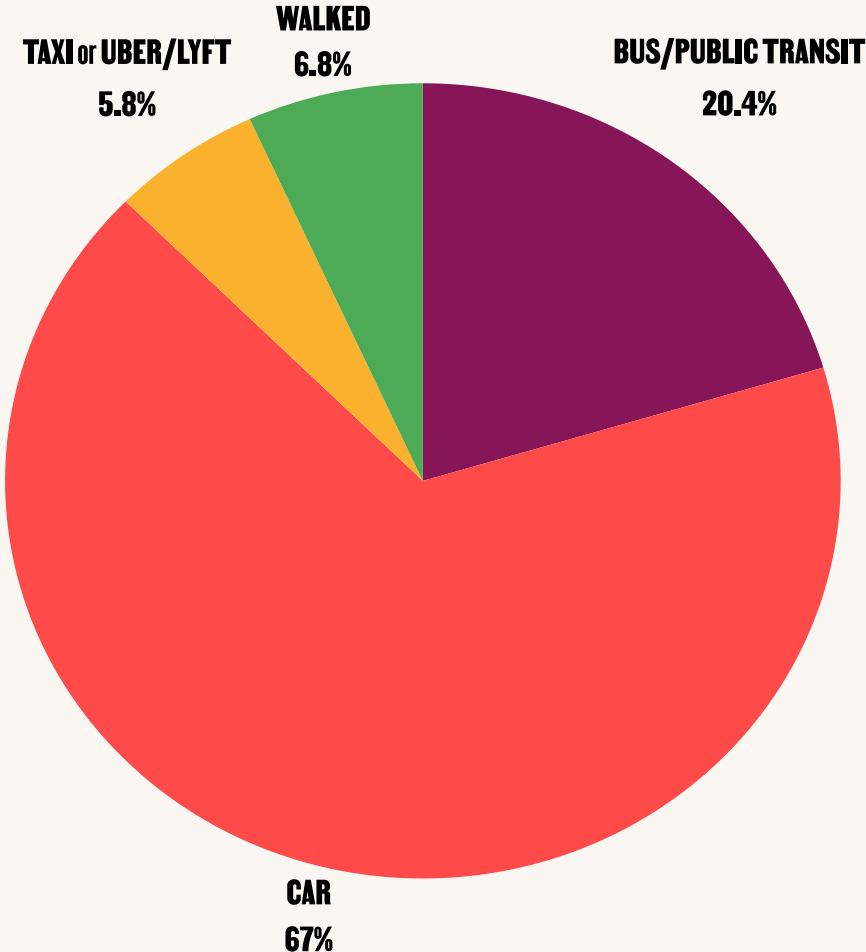
N= 102



1 out of 3 people visitng the court-house said they came by some other way than driving their car. They were most neagatively affected by not being able to bring their phone.

HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

N= 102



Cell phones are important tools to manage **medical conditions** such as:



DIABETES



HEARING LOSS



VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

The **FDA** has authorized consumer electronic devices to manage some of these conditions.

Number of crimes per hour within a 1/2 mile radius of Orleans Parish Criminal District Courthouse in 2023.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12:00 AM	2	4	7	4	4	3	1
1:00 AM	5	1	5	3	3	2	5
2:00 AM	4	5	3	3	7	5	6
3:00 AM	2	7	1	6	1	7	8
4:00 AM	0	4	1	0	5	1	4
5:00 AM	0	2	3	1	1	0	2
6:00 AM	1	5	1	3	0	0	4
7:00 AM	2	2	3	2	2	1	0
8:00 AM	2	6	3	3	2	2	2
9:00 AM	0	2	9	4	3	0	2
10:00 AM	3	2	9	5	5	3	2
11:00 AM	5	9	5	3	2	3	1
12:00 PM	1	8	2	3	3	2	2
1:00 PM	2	3	2	0	4	2	4
2:00 PM	1	3	5	2	4	4	3
3:00 PM	6	1	1	1	5	7	2
4:00 PM	3	0	2	3	1	2	1
5:00 PM	2	3	5	1	1	1	1
6:00 PM	0	0	2	8	2	2	3
7:00 PM	1	0	0	4	2	3	1
8:00 PM	2	5	2	3	1	3	2
9:00 PM	2	2	3	1	5	2	0
10:00 PM	2	1	2	1	5	1	4
11:00 PM	0	5	2	2	1	5	3
Total	48	80	78	66	69	61	63

The two time periods with the most crime are Monday and Tuesday mornings, when court is the busiest.



“One in six households in Orleans Parish don’t have access to a car. This policy harms Orleans Parish residents who don’t have the luxury of driving to the courthouse in a car where they can store their electronic devices.

Transit riders rely on their mobile devices to plan and pay for transit trips using the RTA mobile app. Banning electronics creates unnecessary barriers for transit riders who need to access the justice system.”

-- RIDE NEW ORLEANS

“By not allowing people to bring in the technology that literally in many cases keeps them alive, it is forcing people with disabilities to not be involved with the legal process, and oftentimes literally not able to engage with our system of justice and the criminal legal system. These are not choices that people can make or things that they can leave at home. These are devices that are absolutely necessary for them to navigate the world, understand and participate in conversations, or just exist in that courthouse, and by limiting that you are preventing a large chunk of the population from participating in the criminal legal system just because they use technology to live and navigate the world.”

**--LILA ZUCKER, ORGANIZING DIRECTOR,
NEW DISABLED SOUTH**

“It’s 2024. I think courts are certainly capable of maintaining order in their courtrooms, and I don’t necessarily see phones being an issue that would get in the way of that. From a policy perspective, the court could say, if you’re bringing a phone in, you have to turn it off or [put it on] silent. In Louisiana, you’re not allowed to take pictures in the courtroom. I imagine that’s the main concern of the court to abide by that rule. But like every other rule, if you violate it, you can be held accountable for it. And then you take a picture and you post it, like you’re just telling on yourself. So like there’s a natural accountability mechanism kind of baked in there.”

**--WILL SNOWDEN, PROFESSOR,
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS
COLLEGE OF LAW**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1:

Court Watch NOLA recommends that Orleans Parish Criminal District Court change its policy to officially allow members of the general public to enter the courthouse with electronic devices including cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, and laptop computers.

Recommendation #2:

If the court continues to deny the public access to the courthouse with cell phones and electronic devices, Court Watch NOLA recommends that the court improve its public notification about the court's prohibition to feature a prominent section on court's website with instructions for visitors to the courthouse to ensure that they are aware of the policy before they leave.

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www.courtwatchnola.org