


<p style="text-align: center;">RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</p>  <p>General Order Number: 8.03</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Date of Issue</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">02/23/2016</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Effective Date</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">02/23/2016</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Revision Date</b></p>
<p>Subject: <b>Courthouse Screening Stations</b></p>	<p>Amends:</p>	<p>Rescinds:</p>	
<p>Index as:</p>	<p>State Certification Standards: 6.16</p>		

Special Instructions:

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the policies and procedures of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office personnel assigned to work at the Security Screening Stations located throughout the Rabun County Courthouse.

**I. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office that anyone seeking entry into the Rabun County Courthouse are deemed to have given their consent to a limited search for administrative purposes. Any person who refuses to surrender to a limited search, or a suspicious object or container, to a search will be denied access to the Courthouse.

**II. DISCUSSION**

For the safety and security of the general public and the individuals working in the Rabun County Courthouse, certain items are prohibited from being brought or carried in the Courthouse. These items include weapons of any type, as well as electronic devices, except as provided by court order.

State law prohibits carrying firearms, knives or deadly weapons in a public building or place of gathering. Possession of a firearm license does not exempt a person from application of this law. (O.C.G.A.16-11-127)

**Note:** The court security plan allows only Certified Rabun County Sheriff's Office Deputies, Certified Investigators of the Rabun County District Attorney's Office, Uniformed Police Officers and Undercover Officers showing the proper credentials be permitted to carry said firearms within the Rabun County Courthouse.

The order shall not prevent the Judges of Rabun County Superior, State, Magistrate or Probate Court or the

Northeastern Circuit Court Administrator from carrying a firearm within the Rabun County Courthouse so long as they notify the Sheriff of their intent to carry said firearm.

The order shall in no way prevent the Court Reporters from maintaining firearms tendered into evidence pursuant to their normal retention schedule.

### III. DEFINITIONS

Hand Held Scanner — A device used for the detection of metal objects it is hand held. It is not necessary to make physical contact to be effective.

Magna Scanner — An instrument used for the detection of metal objects. They are located at the main entryways to the courthouse.

Magnetometer — A device for measuring magnetic fields, used to detect ferrous and non-ferrous metal objects in either hand-held or walk-through configurations; commonly known as a “metal detector”.

X-Ray Machine – A machine that penetrates objects with the use of x-rays. The x-ray machine is located at the main entrance to the Courthouse.

### I. SEARCHES AND SEIZURES

1. The Searches and Seizures conducted at the Court Screening Stations are designed to be Administrative in nature. They are an exception to the requirement of a warrant under the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution.
2. The limited warrantless search of persons seeking to enter the Rabun County Courthouse is reasonable and needed to protect Courthouse visitors and employees from violence and other criminal acts.
3. The use of metal detector equipment is a reasonable and inoffensive method of conducting a search.
4. Searches will be limited and will be no more intrusive than necessary to stop weapons and other dangerous items.
5. Searches, inspections and analyses are not conducted for gathering evidence for criminal prosecutions. The purpose of Courthouse Security Screening Stations is to prevent weapons from entering the Rabun County Courthouse.

### II. PROCEDURES

1. Packages, parcels, purses, briefcases, shopping bags, athletic bags, backpacks, camera cases, and other containers are to be surrendered to the deputies and/or security guards operating the Courthouse Screening Stations for inspection and analysis. Everyone seeking entry into the Rabun County Courthouse Court(s) is to be screened. The person desiring to enter shall remove all objects from their pockets, clothing or other places of concealment before entering the walk-through Magna Scanner for physical screening. Persons entering the Court(s) will be asked to remove their hands from their pockets. **Exceptions to screening are Judges, Rabun County Sheriff’s Office Deputies, Certified Investigators with the Rabun County District Attorney’s Office personnel, Mountain Circuit Court Administrators.**

2. Visitors entering the Rabun County Courthouse will not be forced into submitting to a search of their persons or property. Visitors who do not consent to the search will not be allowed entry into the Rabun County Courthouse and will be asked to leave the premises at that time.
3. Any person who alarms a metal detector device is subject to a hand search and/or a pat down will be conducted.

### III. FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED

1. Deputies or Security Personnel should always be alert because they are at initial entry points for anyone who may be attempting to bring weapons, explosives, or other dangerous devices into the Rabun County Courthouse.
2. Deputies and Security Personnel must look at everyone using caution as well as the tools provided (Magna Scanner, X-Ray Machine and Hand Held Scanner) and their instincts, intelligence and experience. When an alarm is sounded, everyone will be carefully checked to determine the cause of the alarm; hand searches and/or pat down will be conducted if necessary.
3. Deputies and Security Personnel must be alert and be aware of planned diversions that may be executed by persons in an attempt to distract them from their duties.
4. Deputies and Security Personnel shall be courteous and professional, yet firm when searching persons and their property.
5. When observing people entering the Rabun County Courthouse keep in mind "If it looks wrong it probably is". (Example, Does it fit the scenario? For example a person is wearing an overcoat on a warm day.) Do not take the responsibility of holding items for anyone; they must remove these items from the Courthouse property.
6. Individuals entering the Rabun County Courthouse may be in a hurry; however Deputies and/or Security Personnel will not compromise security screening procedures to satisfy a person's impatient attitude.
7. If a person has a license to carry a firearm, it does not permit the holder to bring weapons into the Rabun County Courthouse.
8. Law Enforcement Deputies

The court security plan allows *only* certified Rabun County Sheriff's Office , Certified Investigators of the Rabun County District Attorney's Office, Uniformed Police Officers and Undercover Officers showing the proper credentials be permitted to carry said firearms within the Rabun County Courthouse and Courthouse Annex.

### IV. SCREENING PROCEDURES

1. Hand-held Metal Detectors and Pat-Down
  - A. Screening with Hand-held Metal Detectors will be performed in a professional manner. Personnel that use the Hand-held Metal Detectors on a person of the opposite sex should do so as unobtrusively as possible. The Hand-held Metal Detectors should not touch any part of the person's body, especially the breast area of females nor the genitalia area of either sex. However, personnel will not let screening subjects of the opposite sex intimidate them into doing a poor job. Personnel not satisfied with a screening should request an individual of the same sex as the person being screened to conduct a more thorough pat-down search.

- B. Male Deputies and/or Security Personnel will only pat-down male visitors and Female Deputies and/or Security Personnel will only pat-down female visitors.

## 2. Children and Infants

- A. Children present a challenge to the personnel working the screening station. Deputies and/or Security Personnel, who become too aggressive in screening children, may upset the child resulting in screaming, crying, running, or a combination of these. Situations dictating a secondary screening of a child with Hand-held Metal Detectors and/or pat down shall be performed gently. The personnel must explain to the child what they are doing and possibly demonstrate it on an adult whom the child is with to gain their confidence.
- B. Babies in baby carriers or baby strollers will not be allowed to pass through the metal detector in the carriers or baby strollers. The person with the baby shall be instructed to pick up the baby and carry him through the metal detector portal. A through hand search of the carrier and/or stroller will be conducted.

## 3. Disabled Persons

- A. Disabled Persons will not be allowed to by-pass security screening under any circumstances. If the person is in a wheelchair and cannot pass through the metal detector screening with Hand-held Metal Detectors will be performed in a professional manner. Personnel conducting the search must be patient, understanding, and courteous, with the awareness that these searches of disabled persons may be offensive to other people in the immediate area.
- B. When checking persons in wheelchairs carefully inspect the wheelchair and all packages or other objects they may have in their possession. Have the person lean forward in the wheelchair. Use the Hand-held Metal Detector to screen his entire back. Use the Hand-held Metal Detector to check the persons' upper front torso, arms, and legs. Do not overlook the shoes. Thank the person for their cooperation.
- C. Artificial Limbs are excellent places to conceal weapons. Most artificial limbs are made completely out of plastic and should not alarm. When personnel cannot discover the reason for the alarm, they may ask the person to show them their limb. If they agree, they will be taken to the restroom or another room out of sight of the general public. If personnel still are not satisfied after the examination then they shall ask the person to remove the limb and the artificial limb will be inspected. Thank the person for their cooperation.

## 4. Persons with Heart Pacemakers

Use of Hand-held Metal Detectors and walk through Magna Scanners could pose a potential risk to visits with a heart pacemaker or other implant. Do not use Hand-held Metal Detectors above the waist on these persons. Ask them to remove or open jackets and visually inspect for weapons or contraband. Do not submit these persons to the walk through Magna Scanners.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**  
**Sheriff, Rabun County**