

Public Recording & Documentation Manual

Lawful • Peaceful • Ethical • Accountable
v1.0 — Public Activist Use

This manual provides standards for lawful, ethical public recording and documentation. It is intended to protect the public, participants, and documenters while preserving accuracy, dignity, and trust.

This document does not authorize harassment, surveillance, intimidation, or unlawful activity. All participants are responsible for understanding and complying with applicable laws.

1. Purpose

Public documentation increases transparency and accountability when conducted responsibly. The purpose of recording is to create an accurate record of events, not to provoke, harass, or escalate situations.

2. Guiding Principles

- Lawfulness first
- Accuracy over advocacy
- De-escalation over confrontation
- Respect for privacy and dignity

3. Legal Awareness (General)

Recording laws vary by jurisdiction. Participants must understand local rules regarding audio consent, reasonable expectation of privacy, and restrictions in certain facilities. When uncertain, prioritize compliance and disengagement.

4. Where Recording Is Generally Appropriate

- Public spaces where individuals have no reasonable expectation of privacy
- Public meetings open to attendees
- Peaceful demonstrations in public forums

5. Where Recording Is Not Appropriate

- Private property without permission
- Areas with posted restrictions
- Situations involving minors without guardian consent
- Medical emergencies or vulnerable individuals

6. Conduct While Recording

Maintain a calm demeanor. Do not obstruct, follow, or interfere. Avoid commentary that could escalate tension. The recorder's behavior should never become part of the incident.

7. Interaction With the Public

If questioned, respond politely and briefly. Do not argue. If asked to stop where the law requires compliance, disengage and comply.

8. Interaction With Officials

Remain calm and respectful. Do not interfere with lawful duties. Follow lawful orders. Documentation should never compromise safety.

9. Audio Recording Caution

Audio recording often has stricter consent requirements than video. When in doubt, disable audio or obtain clear consent.

10. Accuracy & Context

Record continuously when possible to preserve context. Avoid selective editing that misrepresents events.

11. Data Handling & Privacy

Secure recordings responsibly. Do not publish sensitive personal information. Redact faces or identifying details of private individuals when appropriate.

12. Publishing Standards

Publish only when the material serves public interest. Avoid sensationalism. Provide dates, locations, and factual descriptions.

13. Prohibited Uses

- Harassment or targeting of individuals
- Doxxing or release of personal data
- Incitement or intimidation
- Monetization of harm

14. Safety & De-escalation

Personal safety takes priority. Disengage if tensions rise. No recording is worth injury, arrest, or escalation.

15. Accountability

Violations of these standards may result in removal from participation. Documentation credibility depends on disciplined adherence to these rules.

16. Closing

Responsible documentation strengthens public trust. Discipline, restraint, and respect ensure that recording serves the public good rather than undermining it.