

WA Surveillance Watch Template

SURVEILLANCE CAMERA PUBLIC RECORDS TOOLKIT

Complete Document Index and Usage Guide

For Washington State Residents

WHAT'S IN THIS TOOLKIT?

This toolkit contains everything you need to request and obtain public records about surveillance cameras from law enforcement agencies in Washington State. All documents are based on the Washington Public Records Act (RCW 42.56) and recent legal precedent confirming these records must be made public.

COMPLETE FILE LIST

Core Request Templates (Start Here)

1. Comprehensive Request Template

File: flock_camera_records_request_template.md

Length: 6 pages

Best for: Detailed investigations, journalists, researchers, follow-up requests

What it includes: - Complete legal precedent section (Skagit County ruling) - 8 detailed record categories - Federal access audit requests - Extensive correspondence records - Financial and technical details - Submitter notes and guidance

Use this when: You want maximum information and are willing to file a comprehensive request

2. Simplified Request Template ★ RECOMMENDED FOR BEGINNERS

File: flock_camera_records_request_SIMPLIFIED.md

Length: 2 pages

Best for: First-time requesters, quick investigations, targeted requests

What it includes: - Court ruling reference - 6 core record categories - Federal access requests - Essential information only - Quick submission checklist

Use this when: You're new to public records requests or want key information efficiently

How-To Guides (Read Before Filing)

3. Complete How-To Guide ★ READ THIS FIRST

File: HOW_TO_GUIDE_public_records_requests.md

Length: Comprehensive

What it includes: - Step-by-step instructions (7 detailed steps) - How to identify your local agency - How to find cameras in your area - How to customize templates - How to submit requests - What to expect timeline - Follow-up procedures - Thurston County contact information - Contact info for major WA cities - FAQ section - Troubleshooting common issues

Use this when: You need detailed guidance through the entire process

4. Quick Start One-Page Guide

File: QUICK_START_one_page_guide.md

Length: 1 page (printable)

What it includes: - 5-minute setup instructions - Fill-in-the-blanks guidance - Timeline expectations - Emergency response template - Thurston County quick contacts - Pro tips

Use this when: You want a quick reference card to keep handy

5. Quick Reference Guide

File: QUICK_REFERENCE_surveillance_requests.md

Length: Multi-page reference

What it includes: - Legal rights summary - What to request checklist - If denied guidance - Key contacts - Sample request language - Pro tips and warnings - Follow-up timeline

Use this when: You need quick answers to specific questions during the process

Background Information

6. Legal Context Document ★ IMPORTANT BACKGROUND

File: LEGAL_CONTEXT_surveillance_cameras.md

Length: Comprehensive

What it includes: - Detailed analysis of Skagit County court ruling - University of Washington report findings - Federal access concerns - Civil liberties implications - How to respond to denials - Resources and advocacy contacts - FAQs about the legal landscape

Use this when: You want to understand the legal and political context, or need to cite precedent in appeals

Ready-to-Use Email Templates

7. Email Templates for All Scenarios

File: EMAIL_TEMPLATES_all_scenarios.md

Length: 10 templates

What it includes: - Template 1: Initial submission - Template 2: 5-day follow-up - Template 3: Escalation to department head - Template 4: Appeal of privacy-based denial - Template 5: Response to clarification requests - Template 6: Fee waiver request - Template 7: Response to "records don't exist" - Template 8: Preliminary inquiry - Template 9: Redaction explanation request - Template 10: Thank you and follow-up

Use this when: You need to respond to various agency replies or situations

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

For First-Time Users (Recommended Path)

Step 1: Read the **Quick Start One-Page Guide** (5 minutes) - Get oriented to the process - Understand what you're doing and why

Step 2: Review the **Complete How-To Guide** - at least Steps 1-5 (20 minutes) - Understand the detailed process - Identify your local agency - Learn how to find cameras

Step 3: Choose your template - **Beginners:** Use **Simplified Template** - **Detailed investigation:** Use **Comprehensive Template**

Step 4: Customize your chosen template (15 minutes) - Follow instructions in How-To Guide Step 4 - Fill in all [BRACKETED] items - Save as PDF

Step 5: Submit using **Email Template 1** (5 minutes) - Copy from Email Templates file - Attach your customized template - Send!

Step 6: Keep **Quick Reference Guide** handy for follow-up

Total Time Investment: About 1 hour for your first request

For Experienced Users

If you've filed public records requests before:

1. **Choose:** Comprehensive or Simplified template based on needs
 2. **Customize:** Fill in brackets with your information
 3. **Submit:** Using email or your preferred method
 4. **Follow up:** Using email templates as needed
 5. **Reference:** Legal Context document if you encounter resistance
-

For Specific Situations

Situation 1: Agency Won't Respond

1. Use **Email Template 2** (5-day follow-up) on business day 6
2. Use **Email Template 3** (escalation) on day 10
3. Reference **Troubleshooting section** in How-To Guide
4. Contact ACLU-WA or AG's office if still unresponsive

Situation 2: Denied for Privacy

1. Read **Legal Context** document section on Skagit County ruling
2. Use **Email Template 4** (privacy appeal)

3. Reference **Troubleshooting Issue 2** in How-To Guide
4. Cite specific court language from Legal Context doc

Situation 3: Agency Says Records Don't Exist

1. Use **Email Template 7** (records don't exist response)
2. Reference **Troubleshooting Issue 3** in How-To Guide
3. Request documentation of their search

Situation 4: Heavy Redactions

1. Use **Email Template 9** (redaction justification)
2. Reference **Troubleshooting Issue 6** in How-To Guide
3. Request specific exemption citations

Situation 5: High Fees Quoted

1. Use **Email Template 6** (fee waiver)
 2. Reference **Troubleshooting Issue 4** in How-To Guide
 3. Cite public interest factors from Legal Context
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DOCUMENT RELATIONSHIPS

Here's how the documents work together:

START HERE



[Quick Start Guide] → Get oriented (5 min)



[How-To Guide] → Learn the process (30 min)



Choose Template:

└ [Simplified Template] ← Recommended for beginners

└ [Comprehensive Template] ← For detailed investigation



Customize Template (15 min)



Submit Using [Email Template 1]



Keep Handy:

└ [Quick Reference Guide]

└ [Email Templates 2-10]

└ [Legal Context] ← If you encounter resistance

If Problems Arise:

└ [Troubleshooting in How-To Guide]

└ [Appropriate Email Template]

└ [Legal Context for Court Precedent]

CUSTOMIZATION CHECKLIST

Before submitting ANY request, verify:

In Your Template:

- ☐ Current date inserted
- ☐ Correct agency name (everywhere)
- ☐ Correct agency email
- ☐ Your name, email, and phone
- ☐ Camera locations specified (or "all locations")

- ☐ Date ranges set
- ☐ No [BRACKETS] remaining
- ☐ Saved as PDF with clear filename

In Your Submission Email:

- ☐ Correct recipient address
- ☐ Clear subject line
- ☐ Professional tone
- ☐ PDF attached
- ☐ Your contact info included

RECOMMENDED FILE ORGANIZATION

Create a folder structure like this:

```
My Public Records Requests/
├── Templates/
│   ├── Original Templates (keep these clean)
│   ├── My Customized Requests/
│   └── Email Templates/
├── Submitted Requests/
│   ├── [Agency Name] - [Date]/
│   │   ├── Original Request.pdf
│   │   ├── Confirmation Email.pdf
│   │   └── Correspondence/
│   └── Records Received/
├── Reference Materials/
│   ├── How-To Guide
│   ├── Legal Context
│   ├── Quick Reference
│   └── Court Rulings/Articles
└── Tracking Spreadsheet.xlsx
```

TRACKING YOUR REQUESTS

Create a simple spreadsheet:

Agency	Submitted	Confirmed	Due Date	Status	Next Action	N
Olympia PD	11/15/24	Yes	11/22/24	Waiting	Check 11/22	Ca at . loc
Lacey PD	11/20/24	No	11/27/24	Need confirm	Follow up if no confirm by 11/21	Se: em

LEARNING PATH

Beginner (First Request Ever)

1. Quick Start Guide (5 min)
2. How-To Guide - Steps 1-6 (30 min)
3. Simplified Template

4. Email Template 1
5. Keep Quick Reference handy

Estimated Time: 1 hour total

Intermediate (Some Experience)

1. Review Quick Reference (10 min)
2. Choose appropriate template
3. Customize and submit
4. Use Email Templates as needed

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

Advanced (Multiple Requests/Research)

1. Comprehensive Template
2. Legal Context for deep background
3. Custom modifications based on your needs
4. Coordinate multiple requests across agencies

Estimated Time: Varies

⚠ IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Before You Start

- ✓ You have a legal right to this information
- ✓ You don't need to be a journalist or have a special reason
- ✓ Agencies must respond within 5 business days
- ✓ Recent court ruling supports your request

During the Process

- ✓ Document everything (save all emails)
- ✓ Be professional but firm
- ✓ Follow up promptly if no response
- ✓ Don't be intimidated by delays or pushback

If You Encounter Problems

- ✓ Troubleshooting section in How-To Guide
 - ✓ Appropriate Email Template
 - ✓ Legal Context document for precedent
 - ✓ Contact ACLU-WA or AG's office for help
-

🔧 HELP & SUPPORT

Using This Toolkit

- All documents are in plain language
- Step-by-step instructions provided
- Multiple examples included
- Copy-paste templates ready to use

If You Need Assistance

- **Questions about the process:** Review How-To Guide FAQ section
- **Legal questions:** Contact ACLU-WA at (206) 624-2184
- **Problems with agencies:** Contact AG Open Government at (360) 753-6200
- **Technical issues:** Review Troubleshooting section

Sharing and Using

- ✓ Share this toolkit with others
 - ✓ Use for personal requests
 - ✓ Print guides for reference
 - ✓ Modify templates as needed for your situation
 - ✓ Cite Legal Context in appeals or advocacy
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🎯 SUCCESS METRICS

You've successfully used this toolkit if: - ✓ You submitted a complete, professional request - ✓ Agency responded appropriately - ✓ You received responsive records - ✓ You know what surveillance exists in your community - ✓ You've contributed to government transparency

Even if you encounter resistance: - ✓ You've exercised your rights - ✓ You've documented the agency's response - ✓ You know your next steps - ✓ You can escalate appropriately

💡 PRO TIPS FOR USING THIS TOOLKIT

Time-Saving Tips

1. **First read:** Quick Start Guide only (5 min)
2. **Template choice:** When in doubt, use Simplified
3. **Email templates:** Just copy, paste, customize
4. **Keep digital:** PDF everything for easy sending

Organization Tips

1. **One folder per request:** Keep everything together
2. **Name files clearly:** "[Agency]-[Date]-[Type].pdf"
3. **Track in spreadsheet:** Simple table with key dates
4. **Print Quick Reference:** Keep by your desk

Success Tips

1. **Be persistent:** Follow up promptly
 2. **Stay professional:** Even if frustrated
 3. **Document everything:** Every email, every date
 4. **Use precedent:** Cite Skagit County ruling if denied
 5. **Ask for help:** ACLU-WA and others are there to assist
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✨ WHAT MAKES THIS TOOLKIT SPECIAL

Comprehensive

- Everything you need in one place
- From beginner to advanced

- All scenarios covered

Up-to-Date

- Based on November 2024 court ruling
- Reflects October 2024 UW report findings
- Addresses current federal access concerns

User-Friendly

- Plain language throughout
- Step-by-step instructions
- Copy-paste ready templates
- Multiple entry points for different skill levels

Legally Sound

- Cites specific RCW statutes
- References controlling court precedent
- Written to comply with WA Public Records Act
- Anticipates common agency objections

Community-Focused

- Helps protect vulnerable populations
 - Promotes government transparency
 - Encourages civic engagement
 - Provides resources for collaboration
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GET STARTED NOW

Ready to file your first request?

1. **Open:** Quick Start One-Page Guide
2. **Spend:** 5 minutes reading
3. **Choose:** Simplified Template
4. **Fill in:** The blanks (15 minutes)
5. **Send:** Using Email Template 1

Total time: 30 minutes to make government more transparent!

UPDATES AND MAINTENANCE

This toolkit is current as of **November 2024** and reflects: - ✓
Rodriguez v. Sedro Woolley ruling (Nov 2024) - ✓ UW Center for
Human Rights report (Oct 2024) - ✓ Current RCW 42.56 requirements
- ✓ Known surveillance deployments in WA

Note: Laws and court rulings can change. Check for updates if using
this toolkit after several months have passed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This toolkit was developed to help Washington State residents
exercise their rights to government transparency. It builds on the
groundbreaking work of:

- **Jose Rodriguez:** Whose public records requests led to the landmark court ruling
 - **ACLU of Washington:** For ongoing surveillance transparency advocacy
 - **UW Center for Human Rights:** For investigating federal access to surveillance data
 - **Judge Elizabeth Yost Neidzwski:** For her clear ruling on public records rights
 - **Countless Washington residents:** Who filed requests and demanded accountability
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✓ **FINAL CHECKLIST - ARE YOU READY?**

- ☐ I have the toolkit documents downloaded/accessible
 - ☐ I've read at least the Quick Start Guide
 - ☐ I know which agency to contact
 - ☐ I've chosen my template (Simplified or Comprehensive)
 - ☐ I understand the basic process
 - ☐ I know where to go for help if needed
 - ☐ I'm ready to exercise my rights!
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🦋 **YOU'RE READY TO START!**

This toolkit gives you everything you need to: - Understand your rights - File professional requests - Handle any response - Overcome obstacles - Bring transparency to surveillance in your community

Remember: Every request matters. Every act of engagement strengthens democracy. You've got this!

Questions? Problems? Need help? - Review the How-To Guide - Check the Email Templates - Reference the Legal Context - Contact ACLU-WA or AG's office

Now go make your community more transparent and accountable!

*Washington State Surveillance Camera Public Records Toolkit
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For questions, contact advocacy organizations listed in the toolkit

"Sunlight is the best disinfectant." - Justice Louis Brandeis