



Public Recording of Police Activities

Officer's Study Guide



COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice





IACP EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Vincent Talucci
*Executive Director/Chief
Executive Officer*

Gwen Boniface
Deputy Executive Director

COPS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Ronald L. Davis
Director

Toni Morgan
Program Manager

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Cover Photo Credit: Mickey H. Osterreicher

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Fred H. Bealefeld

Commissioner of Police (Ret.)
Baltimore City (MD) Police
Department

Eric Daigle, Esq.

Daigle Law Group
Southington, Connecticut

James Dermody

Captain
Seattle (WA) Police Department

Mary Gavin

Chief of Police
Falls Church (VA) Police Department

Billy Grogan

Chief of Police
Dunwoody (GA) Police Department

Francis Healy

Captain
Philadelphia (PA) Police Department

Will Johnson

Chief of Police
Arlington (TX) Police Department

Lisa Judge, Esq.

Police Legal Advisor
Tucson (AZ) Police Department

Mickey Osterreicher

General Counsel
National Press Photographers Association

Ralph Price

Deputy Chief/General Counsel
Chicago (IL) Police Department

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Edward P. Bergin

Major
Anne Arundel County (MD) Police Department

Michael Burton

Sergeant
Baltimore County (MD) Police Department

Kevin Gaddis

Deputy Chief
Metro Transit (DC) Police Department

Jason Johnson

Major
Prince George's County (MD)
Police Department

Ryan Morgan

Assistant Commander
Fairfax County (VA) Police Department

Kimberly Schneider

Lieutenant
US Capitol Police Department

Zygmund Slevinski

Sergeant
Alexandria (VA) Police Department

Steven Thompson

Major
Prince William County (VA) Police Department

Background

Recording of police conduct was first brought into focus with the events surrounding the arrest of Rodney King in March 1991. That and subsequent incidents have been the subject of news stories worldwide. The proliferation of video recording capabilities in cellphones, smartphones, and similar devices has made it easy for the public to record events and activities—including the actions of police officers performing their duties in public places. The motivation of individuals who choose to record the actions of police officers can range from simple curiosity to attempts to document what are felt to be unwarranted or inappropriate police actions. In numerous instances, police agencies' failure to have, or police officers' failure to follow, departmental policy, procedures, and training on the First Amendment right to record have resulted in legal action.

Until recently, the courts have not provided consistent and uniform rulings that could be relied upon to frame sound operational protocols to guide officers in protecting an individual's right to record.¹ In this vacuum, many law enforcement officers were required to use their own judgment; that judgment has, in some instances, been clouded by a natural aversion toward uninvited recording and presumed scrutiny of their actions. Seizure of recording devices and destruction of audio or video media have been employed in some cases, as have misdemeanor charges lodged against recording parties in an attempt to terminate recordings. Not all U.S. Circuit Courts have ruled on this matter; however, numerous legal challenges to these police actions have resulted in a series of court decisions in recent years that have helped to clarify the legal rights and limitations of the police, the public, and the media regarding the recording of police officers.

From these rulings it has become clear that recording the actions and activities of police officers in the performance of their public duties is a form of speech by which individuals may gather and disseminate information of public concern.² The free discussion of public affairs in general is a fundamental right of the public under the First Amendment. The ability to observe the functions of government in general, and agents of government in particular, is an essential component of the public's right under the First Amendment, whether it is simply observed or captured by video, photograph, or audio recordings. This right is extended to recording of any police activity performed in public or where the recording party otherwise has a legal right to be present. In effect, the public has the same rights to record police activities as the media.³ In fact, in today's technological environment, it is often the case that individuals in the public are the first to make such recordings.

¹ See, e.g., *Kelly v. Borough of Carlisle*, 622 F.3d 248 (2010) in which the court granted an officer qualified immunity in a lawsuit based on the fact that the right to film police was not a clearly established right of which the officer could reasonably have been aware.

² See, e.g., *Glik v. Cunniffe*, 655 F.3d 78, 82 (1st Cir. 2011).

³ See, e.g., *Pell v. Procunier*, 417 U.S. 817 (1974). Reporters have no constitutional right of access to the scenes of crime or disaster when the general public is excluded.

Limitations on the First Amendment Right to Record

While the public has a broad-based right to record police activities, that right is not absolute. The first limitation is that the individual must be recording in a public place or where he or she otherwise has a legal right to be present.

Public space includes locations that are open and legally accessible to the public, such as parks, beaches, streets, and buildings designated for public use, such as libraries and the open and common areas of government buildings. Community shopping malls or other places of commerce, though generally privately owned, are accessible, open to the general public, and intended for public use, although their use can be limited by property management if necessary. On the other hand, private residences and other private property are not open to the public unless the owner or resident has given permission to others to be present.

An individual's right to record may also be limited by what are referred to as "time, place, or manner restrictions."⁴ These restrictions on freedom of speech must be content-neutral, narrowly tailored to serve a significant governmental interest, and leave open reasonable alternative avenues of communication. For example, requesting that someone recording move out of the street and onto the sidewalk for their safety is a reasonable restriction on place: it serves a significant governmental interest (public safety) and leaves open reasonable alternative avenues of communication (recording from a different, but safer location). Additionally, a person's desire or intent to observe, photograph, or video record police activity does not entitle the recorder to trespass on private property or enter a private dwelling or similar private space, place him- or herself or others in physical danger, enter a marked crime scene, or otherwise enter any area not generally accessible to the general public.

Time, place, and manner restrictions also dictate that persons making recordings not do so in a manner that materially interferes with police activities. "Interference" has been interpreted in various ways depending on individual officer perspectives. In fact, the simple act of recording has been improperly characterized by some officers as an act of interference in and of itself. This interpretation has, in some instances, led officers to direct involved parties to stop recording or to leave the area, cite the individual for loitering or for committing other minor offenses, or even served as the justification to seize recording devices or destroy recordings. *When considering these or similar enforcement actions against an individual, the officer must be able to clearly and objectively articulate a reason for the action that is separate from the act of recording. The act of recording alone does not provide grounds for taking enforcement actions, even if the officer considers the act to be a distraction or annoyance.*

⁴ See, e.g., *Glik*, 655 F.3d 78 in which the court stated that the right to record police is not absolute, but is subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions.

The following are examples of reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions. Individuals who record police activities may be asked to abide by such restrictions in order to avoid causing material interference:

- Recording parties must maintain a reasonable distance from the officer(s) engaged in enforcement or related police duties. Persons may not physically position themselves in a manner that obstructs officers from performing their duties.
- Recording parties may not take actions that unduly delay police attempts to conduct enforcement or emergency activities. Standing in the way of victims, suspects, witnesses, emergency responders; impeding traffic; or similar actions are examples of such activities. If reasonable to do so, officers should direct recording parties to permissible recording locations or provide them with other options for recording that will not hamper law enforcement officials or other first responders from conducting their duties. Failure to heed reasonable police directives may subsequently provide the basis for citation or arrest.
- Individuals can be restricted from certain areas or directed to move if necessary to ensure the safety of officers, victims, witnesses, and third parties. For example, police may restrict individuals from standing in close proximity to an investigative stop if that person's presence creates a potential hazard to the officer or others. Officers can also restrict the public's access to or recording of incident scenes and tactical operations by establishing a marked perimeter. Recording of tactical operations such as serving arrest or search warrants from too close a distance could jeopardize officer and public safety.

Although members of the public have substantial latitude to record police activities, standard officer safety procedures must still be followed. For example, recording parties need to maintain a reasonable distance from officers in order for officers to guard against sudden attack. In some cases, it may be advisable to summon backup assistance in order to help in keeping recording persons and spectators at a reasonable distance.

It should also be noted that properly credentialed members of the media may be allowed greater access to crime scenes than the general public. This practice is subject to agency policy and supervisory approval. However, it is important to remember that members of the media are entitled to at least the same access as the general public and may not be restricted from areas in which the public is allowed access.

Finally, it is entirely reasonable for officers to want to protect the privacy of victims or witnesses, but this should be accomplished only by such means as shielding victims or interviewing witnesses in private areas whenever possible. If interviews are conducted in a place that is legally accessible to the public, conversations are open to recording by the public and the media. Persons who are audio and/or video recording must be given the same allowances and restrictions as other persons who are not recording.

Enforcement actions taken against individuals who are recording police activities must be based on objective, articulable violations of the law that are unrelated to the act of recording alone. Recording the police does not, of itself, establish legal grounds for arrest, issuance of citations, or taking other actions to restrict such recordings.

Important points to remember

- Recording the actions and activities of police officers in the performance of their public duties is a form of constitutionally protected speech through which individuals may gather and disseminate information of public concern.
- This right is extended to recording of any police activity performed in public and where an individual otherwise has a legal right to be present.
- While the public has a broad-based right to record police activities, that right is not absolute. For instance, persons making recordings may not do so in a manner that materially interferes with police activities.
- Properly credentialed members of the media are entitled to at least the same access as the general public.
- The act of recording alone does not provide grounds for taking enforcement action, even though it may be a distraction or annoyance.

Court Orders and Warrant Requirements

Nearly all seizures and searches of recording devices require a court order or warrant in accordance with provisions of the Fourth Amendment. Several notable state court decisions preceded a 2014 U.S. Supreme Court ruling on this matter.

First, in January 2011, the California Supreme Court, in *People v. Diaz*,⁵ ruled that the police are authorized to search any person's cellphone, without a warrant, following an arrest, under the principle of safeguarding evidence from destruction and conducting a search incident to arrest. In another case in California, police found indications of gang membership when they looked through the smartphone of David Riley. Following the precedent set in *Diaz*, video and photographs found in the phone were sufficient to convict Riley of attempted murder and other charges. The California Court of Appeal and the California Supreme Court upheld the conviction.

Next, in another cellphone search case in Boston, MA, police arrested Brima Wurie on suspicion of selling crack cocaine. The call log on his cellphone was examined to determine where he lived. With a warrant, police searched his house and found crack cocaine, marijuana, a firearm, and ammunition. However, in this case, a federal appeals court ruled that police must have had a warrant before searching the arrestee's cellphone.

However, both the *Riley* and *Wurie* cases were the subject of review by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2014.⁶ The court unanimously ruled that while officers may seize cellphones incident to arrest, police **may not**, with only minor exceptions, search the cellphones of people they arrest without first getting a search warrant. The rationale for this is that modern cellphones and particularly smartphones hold a vast assortment of personal and potentially sensitive information. This does not compare with other personal items that an arrestee may carry on his or her person, such as a wallet, cigarettes, or keys. The court did not comment on one possible exception to the warrant requirement, noted in the following section, related to situations where officers may fear for their lives or the lives of others.

Important point to remember

- Nearly all seizures and searches of recording devices require a court order or warrant in accordance with provisions of the Fourth Amendment.

⁵ *People v. Diaz*, 51 Cal. 4th 84, 244 P.3d 501, 119 Cal. Rptr. 3d 105 (2011).

⁶ *Riley v. California*, 573 U.S. ____ (2014) No. 13-132, decided June 25, 2014, together with *U.S. v. Wurie*, No. 13-212, on *cert.* from the First Circuit Court of Appeals.

Seizures of Recording Devices

The Fourth Amendment guarantees “the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures.”⁷ A person’s effects are provided even greater security under the Fourth Amendment when they are also protected by the First Amendment, as with devices used to record in public. Attempts to seize recordings made legally in public spaces are justifiable only in very limited exigent circumstances. As such, the *IACP Model Policy on Recording Police Activity* states that “[a]bsent arrest of the recording party, recording equipment may not be seized.” In addition, the model policy cautions that “officers may not order an individual to show recordings that have been made of enforcement actions or other police operations.”⁸

Without exception, police may not destroy or delete audio and video recordings or order the person engaged in recording, or a third party, to delete or destroy such recordings, whether they are obtained with a warrant or through a bona fide exception to the warrant requirement. One such incident⁹ resulted in a complaint against the police department, in which the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) weighed in with a statement of interest¹⁰ pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 517. The plaintiff, Christopher Sharp, alleged to have witnessed officers forcibly arresting his friend and used his cellphone to video and audio record the incident. Twice Sharp refused officers’ demands to surrender his cellphone, but subsequently conceded to the request of an officer who indicated he needed to review and possibly copy the recording as evidence. The officer left with the phone and upon its return, Sharp discovered that all recordings on his phone had been deleted, including personal photos and videos unrelated to the incident at hand. Sharp subsequently filed a complaint alleging violations of the First, Fourth, and Fourteenth amendments.

In its statement of interest, the DOJ cited a significant body of case law that affirmed the rights of persons to video and audiotape police during the course of their duties under provisions of the Constitution, so long as the recording parties abide by reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions. The statement also specifically noted that the mere issuance of a policy on the rights of the public to record police is insufficient to properly inform and train officers on this matter. The rationale behind the rights of the public, specifically connected to provisions of the First and Fourth Amendments, needs to be explained and made clear. For example, the meanings of such terms as

⁷ U.S. Const. amend. IV.

⁸ The *IACP Model Policy on Recording Police Activity* can be found at <http://www.theiacp.org/MPRecordingPoliceActivity>.

⁹ *Sharp v. Baltimore City Police Department*, United States District Court for the District of Maryland, Civil No. 1:11-cv-02888-BEL.

¹⁰ Johnathan M. Smith (chief, Special Litigation Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice), “Re: *Christopher Sharp v. Baltimore City Police Department*, et. Al,” to Mark H. Grimes (Office of Legal Affairs, Baltimore Police Department) and Mary E. Borja (Wiley Rein LLP), May 14, 2012, https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2012/05/17/Sharp_ltr_5-14-12.pdf.

“interference” need to be clarified by case examples and with specificity so that potential loopholes can be avoided. In addition, directions on how to address recording parties and, where necessary, to direct them to alternative acceptable locations for recording should be outlined in order to avoid police-civilian confrontations.¹¹

Exceptions to the warrant requirement

Under certain circumstances, an officer may have a good faith belief that a recording device contains evidence of a serious crime. Generally, a “serious crime” includes circumstances in which death or serious bodily harm is involved or is reasonably likely to occur if immediate action is not taken. To confirm this belief, an officer may ask the recording party for voluntary consent to view the recording. If consent is given, and the officer determines that access to the evidence is important, the least intrusive first step is to ask the recording party whether he or she will voluntarily consent to give the recording medium—such as the device itself or a memory card—to the officer temporarily so that relevant recordings can be duplicated. As noted, consent must be provided voluntarily; an officer cannot implicitly or explicitly threaten or coerce the individual. The recording individual may also choose to give qualified consent that permits viewing of only certain files or images and not others, or may not permit duplication of any files, images, or sound recordings. As an alternative to taking possession of a recording device or the recording medium, an officer may ask the owner to transmit relevant images or sound recordings to the officer’s government email address. If the recording party refuses to comply with any of these requests, officers should request the assistance of a supervisor.

However, if the officer believes that probable cause exists that evidence of a serious crime has been recorded and that failure to seize the recording device prior to the issuance of a warrant is reasonably likely to result in the loss or destruction of such evidence, the officer may temporarily detain the recording party and request the assistance of a supervisor to determine if a warrant should be sought.

In exigent circumstances, where there is probable cause to believe that the immediate seizure and search of a recording device without a warrant is necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury, the recording party may be temporarily detained and a supervisor contacted to determine whether the seizure and search are authorized without a warrant.

It should be emphasized that a court order or warrant is always preferable prior to conducting a seizure or search. Warrantless seizures and searches are presumptively illegal; in accordance with the Fourth Amendment, solid grounds must be established prior to taking such actions. Should a warrantless search later be ruled unreasonable, any evidence obtained may be prevented from use in a prosecution under the exclusionary rule.¹²

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Mapp v. Ohio*, 367 U.S. 643 (1961).

If a recording device or medium is seized, due care must be exercised in its safekeeping. It should be properly identified by serial number or other identifier, and a departmentally authorized property receipt should be completed and a copy given to the owner. Information should be provided to the owner concerning where, when, and how to recover the property. The device or memory card should be submitted as quickly as possible to the designated departmental unit for examination once a warrant has been obtained to do so.

Important points to remember

- Seizure of recording devices requires a warrant supported by probable cause. Warrantless seizures require exigent circumstances and probable cause.
- A court order or warrant is always preferable prior to conducting a seizure and search in order to avoid a later exclusion of any evidence.
- Without exception, police may not delete, destroy, or alter audio and video recordings or order the person engaged in recording, or a third party, to delete, destroy, or alter such recordings.
- Under certain circumstances, probable cause may exist sufficient to believe that a recording device contains evidence of a serious crime. In that case, officers should first ask the recording party whether he or she will voluntarily consent to allow the recording to be viewed by the officer, allow a copy of the recording to be made, or send a copy of the file via email to the officer. If the recording party refuses, officers should contact a supervisor.
- In situations where there is probable cause to believe that the immediate seizure and search of a recording device without a warrant is necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury, the recording party may be temporarily detained and a supervisor summoned to determine whether a warrantless search is justified.

Audio Recordings and Wiretapping Laws

The question may arise as to whether audio recordings are also protected, as they normally accompany video recordings. This issue has arisen in some of the states that have wiretapping statutes, but arrests for recordings based on such alleged violations have not received support by federal or state courts.¹³

One case that gained national attention was that of Anthony Graber, a motorcyclist who used a helmet camera to record his wild ride on a crowded highway. Graber recorded himself weaving in and out of traffic at high rates of speed—actions that clearly created a danger to himself and others. He was eventually stopped by an off-duty officer who was video and audio recorded by Graber. Following the stop, Graber posted the video recordings of his ride and his verbal exchange with the officer during the stop on YouTube.¹⁴ Graber was arrested and, among other vehicular offenses, charged with violation of Maryland’s wiretapping statute for failure to obtain the officer’s consent to audio record him. But the trial judge ruled that the recorded audio exchange between the arrestee and the officer was not a private conversation as intended by the provisions of the state wiretap statute, finding “there is no expectation of privacy concerning a traffic stop on a public street. The law is clearly established that a traffic stop is not a private encounter.”¹⁵ Charges concerning making and disseminating the recording were dismissed.

In another example of the courts’ response to wiretapping laws, Illinois previously had one of the most stringent laws regarding audio recording of others, requiring that all parties must agree to be recorded.¹⁶ But even there, in 2011, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals blocked enforcement of the state’s eavesdropping statute as applied to audio recordings of police. The court stated that

Illinois has criminalized the nonconsensual recording of most any oral communication, including recordings of public officials doing the public’s business in public and regardless of whether the recording is open or surreptitious. Defending the broad sweep of this statute, the State’s Attorney relies on the government’s interest in protecting conversational privacy, but that interest is not implicated when police officers are performing their duties in public places and engaging in public communications audible to persons who witness the events.¹⁷

¹³ See, e.g., *Glik*, 655 F.3d 78; *ibid*.

¹⁴ Anthony Graber, “Motorcycle Traffic Violation - Cop Pulls out Gun,” YouTube.com, March 12, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHjjF55M8JQ>. *State v. Graber*, No. 12-K-10-0647 (Md. Cir. Ct. Harford Cty. Sept. 27, 2010).

¹⁵ *State v. Graber*, No. 12-K-10-0647 (Md. Cir. Ct. Harford Cty. Sept. 27, 2010). See also “Video and Audio Taping Police Activity,” *AELE Mo. L. J.* 201, no. 7 (July 2012): 101–111.

¹⁶ 720 ILL. COMP. STAT. 5/14-2(a)(1).

¹⁷ *American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois v. Anita Alvarez*, No. 11-1286, (7th Cir. May 8, 2012).

On November 26, 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court, without comment, declined to hear an appeal to the Seventh Circuit ruling.¹⁸ Following this, on March 20, 2014, the Illinois Supreme Court held that the state's eavesdropping statute violated the First Amendment, as it prohibited the open recording of public conversations. In December 2014, an amendment was signed into law that limits the statute to the surreptitious recording of private conversations and electronic communications.¹⁹

As exemplified in Illinois, the *Graber* case, and others, police officers conducting their duties in public places do not normally have expectations of privacy in their public conversations. Another lesson learned from these cases is how easily and how often audiovisual recordings of police activities enter and rapidly spread through social media. As such, it is suggested that officers assume that their actions are always being recorded.

Important points to remember

- Arrests for recordings based on alleged violations of state wiretapping statutes have not received support by federal or state courts in the 12 states that have such legal restrictions.
- There is no expectation of privacy concerning a traffic stop on a public street. The law is clearly established that a traffic stop is not a private encounter.

¹⁸ *Alvarez v. ACLU of Ill., cert denied*, 12-318 (U.S. Nov. 26, 2012), http://www.supremecourt.gov/orders/courtorders/112612zor_f204.pdf (accessed December 6, 2013).

¹⁹ An Act Concerning Criminal Law, Ill., Pub. A. 098-1142 (2014).

Deflection, De-escalation, and Disengagement

Officers should always assume that their actions are being recorded. In addition, officers may encounter recording parties who purposely engage officers by using confrontational, inflammatory, or insulting language or actions. This practice may be a mechanism to provoke a negative response from officers that can then be recorded and distributed.

The best approach for officers confronted with these situations is to ignore the recording individual, no matter how difficult, especially if the negative behavior continues unabated. But there are several other steps that officers can take in order to mitigate the impact of these situations and to discourage such individuals from continuing their provocations. For example, officers should remember that while persons may record their actions, they cannot do so at a distance that may place the individual, officer, or others in danger. Instead, the individuals should be directed to move to a reasonable location that provides officers with an acceptable distance in case of unanticipated physical attack. However, this location should not be chosen to purposely bar onlookers from making recordings. If necessary, this distance can be marked as a physical perimeter in whatever manner is available and suitable for the situation. It should be remembered, however, that once a perimeter is established, **all** unauthorized individuals should be barred from entering the area, not just those individuals who are recording.

In recognition of the potential of such confrontations, it is worthwhile for officers to mentally prepare some responses to uncooperative recording parties. For instance, one means of responding to uncooperative recording persons is to acknowledge that the individual has a right to record. The officer should also inform the individual that while the right to record exists, he or she does not have the right to materially interfere with police business by standing too close to officers, witnesses, victims, or other emergency responders at the scene, or by using any other means that creates a safety hazard for officers or others. If this does not serve to pacify the individual, the officer should offer to contact a supervisor or the agency's public information officer. In fact, officers should always consider contacting a supervisor any time a recording individual displays undesirable behavior.

Once again, it must be stressed that enforcement actions, up to and including arrest, cannot be used against an individual solely because he or she is recording. The officer must be able to articulate a reason for these actions that is completely separate from the fact that the individual is recording.

Important points to remember

- Officers should assume that their actions are always being recorded.
- Previously established responses should be used when confronted with difficult recording parties.
- Officers should contact a supervisor in any situation where a recording party is combative or uncooperative.

Test Your Learning

The following questions are based on information contained in this document.

Select the **one** best answer for each question.

1. Recording the actions and activities of police officers in the performance of their public duties is a form of speech through which individuals may gather and disseminate information of public concern. Based on this, which of the following statements is true?
 - a. This right is extended to recording of any police activity performed in public or where an individual otherwise has a legal right to be present.
 - b. The right to record police officers in public is absolute.
 - c. Persons making recordings may do so in any manner necessary.
 - d. Individuals may be directed to stop recording if it becomes a distraction or annoyance to the officer.
2. Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. Officers should always assume that their actions are being recorded.
 - b. Except in very narrowly defined exigent circumstances, seizures and searches of recording devices require a court order or warrant.
 - c. Seizures and searches of recording devices are governed by provisions of the Fourth Amendment.
 - d. All of the above.
3. Which of the following statements is false?
 - a. Police officers can lawfully require recording parties to show them the recordings.
 - b. Police officers may delete audio or video recordings if they are obtained with a warrant.
 - c. Both of the above.
 - d. Neither of the above.
4. Decisions to arrest recording parties who fail to follow reasonable time, place, and manner directions or commands must be based on objective, articulable violations of the law that are unrelated to the act of recording alone.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Which of the following conditions would be considered a legitimate case of interference with an officer by a recording party?
 - a. Standing so close to the officer that he or she cannot conduct police business.
 - b. Creating a mental distraction to the officer conducting police business.
 - c. Yelling profanities at law enforcement or emergency medical personnel.
 - d. Creating an annoyance to an officer conducting police business.

6. If a recording party is materially interfering with an officer conducting police business, which of the following is the best corrective action for the officer to take?
 - a. Tell the recording party to stop recording.
 - b. Ask the recording party to move to another location of reasonable distance from the incident.
 - c. Tell the recording party that recording police is illegal.
 - d. Tell the recording party that their recording equipment may be seized.
7. If there is probable cause to believe that a recording contains evidence of a serious crime that may be of value to an investigation, an officer may do which of the following?
 - a. Ask the recording party if he or she will allow the officer to view the recording.
 - b. Ask the recording party for consent to make a copy of the recording.
 - c. Ask the recording party if he or she will transmit the recording to a departmental email address.
 - d. All of the above.
8. In situations where there is probable cause to believe that the immediate seizure and search of a recording device without a warrant is necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury, the recording party may be temporarily detained and a supervisor or higher-level command officer summoned to gain permission for the search without a warrant.
 - a. True
 - b. False
9. A recording device may be seized and its contents examined incident to an arrest of the recording party.
 - a. True
 - b. False
10. Without consent of the recording party, a warrant or court order is always required prior to copying video recordings.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Answers

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | a | 6. | b |
| 2. | d | 7. | d |
| 3. | c | 8. | a |
| 4. | a | 9. | b |
| 5. | a | 10. | a |

About the IACP

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is a professional association for law enforcement worldwide. For more than 120 years, the IACP has been launching internationally acclaimed programs, speaking on behalf of law enforcement, conducting groundbreaking research, and providing exemplary programs and services to members across the globe.

Today, the IACP continues to be recognized as a leader in these areas. By maximizing the collective efforts of the membership, IACP actively supports law enforcement through advocacy, outreach, education, and programs.

Through ongoing strategic partnerships across the public safety spectrum, the IACP provides members with resources and support in all aspects of law enforcement policy and operations. These tools help members perform their jobs effectively, efficiently, and safely while also educating the public on the role of law enforcement to help build sustainable community relations.

About the COPS Office

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Rather than simply responding to crimes once they have been committed, community policing concentrates on preventing crime and eliminating the atmosphere of fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety enables law enforcement to better understand and address both the needs of the community and the factors that contribute to crime.

The COPS Office awards grants to state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders and all levels of law enforcement. The COPS Office has produced and compiled a broad range of information resources that can help law enforcement better address specific crime and operational issues, and help community leaders better understand how to work cooperatively with their law enforcement agency to reduce crime.

- Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.
- To date, the COPS Office has funded approximately 125,000 additional officers to more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country in small and large jurisdictions alike.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than 8.57 million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.

COPS Office resources, covering a wide breadth of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—are available, at no cost, through its online Resource Center at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This easy-to-navigate website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.



COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street NE
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.



International Association of Chiefs of Police
44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314

<http://www.theiacp.org/>