



**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania**

**Policy 5-05**

**Policy Title:** Persons Recording Police Employees

**Date of Issue:** December 1, 2022

**Rescinds:** None

**By Authority of:**

**Chief of Police**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for reacting to and interacting with persons who are using an audio / video recording device to take sound and / or pictures of department employees and / or police activity.

**II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Springfield Township Police Department to recognize the legal standing of members of the public to make video / audio recordings of police officers and civilian employees who are carrying out their official police duties in an area open to the public, and by citizens who have a legal right to be in an area where police are operating, such as a person's home or business. However, this right does not prevent officers from taking measures to ensure that such activity and recording does not interfere or impede with the officer's law enforcement and public safety purpose.

**III. Persons Not Involved in Police Action**

- A. Police personnel will not normally interfere with persons in a public place who are using audio / video recording devices to record police activities. This will also apply to authorized persons on private property.
- B. When a person who is not the subject of a police action records or is about to record police activity and is located in a position that impedes or interferes with the safety of police personnel or the ability of police personnel to perform their law enforcement function or public safety duties, a police officer shall direct the person where they can move so that they are safely away from the scene, but still in a position to use the device.

**III. Persons Who Are Involved In or the Subject of Police Action**

- A. Whenever a person who is the subject of a police action produces a camera within close proximity to the officer and begins to film or indicates that they are going to point it at the officers and start recording, the officer should inquire if the person is both audio and video taping.
- B. If the officer needs to be in close proximity to complete the task at hand, the officer shall request that the person put the camera out of reach until the officer has completed the task.
- C. If the subject refuses to put the camera out of reach the officer may not take any further action.
- D. If the subject attempts to use the camera as a weapon against the officer, the officer may forcibly take away the camera, just as any other object that could be used as a weapon.

#### **IV. High Risk and Confidential Police Activities**

In the event police are engaged in law enforcement activities that are of a high risk or confidential nature, and the video recording of such event would jeopardize the immediate police mission, the subject will be ordered to stop recording or be removed to a location where they cannot effectively record. Examples are: hostage situations, barricaded gunman situations, and undercover operations where the recording of officers and / or informants would jeopardize their safety during the operation or thereafter.