

# Police: THE TOOLS

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Laws may have changed if you are reading this far into the future.



## WHY FILM POLICE?



We know that we are not safe with police officers. They are the attack dogs of the state, and the state allows them to act as they wish, without any repercussions. They use their authority to intimidate and brutalize the communities under their tyranny. Filming police won't change their role as the state's loaded gun, but it is a way we can hold them accountable. Knowing they are filmed may trigger them to check their behavior, and in the event that they don't, it becomes more difficult for them to lie to jurors and communities about their crimes.

## IF YOU FLASH YOUR BRAKE LIGHTS TO WARN OTHER DRIVERS ABOUT A SPEED TRAP, YOU ALREADY UNDERSTAND THAT WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT OURSELVES FROM POLICE.

## YOUR FOOTAGE

If safe and possible, you should have announced were filming to let the person being detained know that you were there. If you can interact with them after the police interaction is over, get their name and ask if they would like to be sent the footage. If they ask for it to be deleted, do that. Police interactions can be humiliating, via violating experiences, especially when violence is involved. Consider sharing videos among other trusted activists, or a lawyer or a journalist. Social media can be useful for documenting police behavior, but consider whether or not it will endanger you or others. When in doubt, don't post. But if it is right to post, blur victims and witnesses.

## PREPARE YOUR DEVICE

Your phone is most likely be using your phone to record.

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- ☐ Have a lock on your phone, like a password. If a cop unlawfully collects your phone, this ensures they can't get into it. Also, make sure notifications from apps like Signal are not readable from your lockscreen.
- ☐ Secure your footage. Keep it backed up so it automatically goes to the cloud. In the event a cop forces you to delete footage, you'll have a backup.
- ☐ Make sure your phone has enough space. Video files are big, and cop interactions are usually quite long compared to personal videos.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In the US, it is legal to film police officers working in public spaces so long as you are not interfering with them, audio and video. Even in the 12 states that have both-party recording laws, courts have ruled that these laws do not apply to on-duty police officers. Record openly if possible. Secretly recording conversations is illegal in several states.

## COPS DON'T ALWAYS KNOW OR CARE.

You may be approached by police while filming them. If they tell you to back up, it is best to comply. You can inform them that you are following the law, however you should still prepare for the possibility that you are arrested or detained.

## CAPTURE USEFUL FOOTAGE

A blurry, silent shot of a police encounter is better than no shot of a police officer, but intention in filming produces more useful footage. Film as much of the interaction as you can. Try to capture things like license plates, details of officers (like faces, numbers, and uniforms), injuries, and weapons, as well as landmarks that can provide location context. Don't narrate or comment unless necessary to point out details that can't be seen on camera. If you are in a protest setting, avoid recording your comrades. Focus on the cops!