

**#PoliceThePolice Pledge**

# ● STOP AND FILM

**Script and Best  
Practices Guide**

It is our First Amendment [right to videotape or photograph the police](#) in public space, and right now, it seems like the best way that white people can use their white privilege to help protect the black community, which is disproportionately affected by police brutality. Black men, for example, are 2.5 times more likely than white men to die during encounters with cops.

We've been saying their names, but it's not enough. In a world of stop-and-frisk, let's **Stop and Film**. If you see a black person stopped by law enforcement, stop in solidarity and film if you believe excessive force is being used. Hold the cops accountable. Let them know we're watching. Let's not let another unarmed black man, woman, or child become another hashtag. Here are some best practices and a script you can use when you Stop and Film.

Learn More at [PoliceThePolicePledge.com](https://www.PoliceThePolicePledge.com)  
Use your white privilege to end police brutality against the black community.



# Stop and Film Best Practices

Be informed. Be respectful.  
Be an ally.

The following best practices are provided by the Policing Project's [Guide to Filming the Police](#).

## Do

- **Do** treat everyone with courtesy and respect.
- **Do** step back if directed. (Keep at least six feet of distance as a start.)
- **Do** demonstrate you are not a threat by holding the camera without any sudden or aggressive movements.
- **Do** calmly ask the officers to state a basis for their actions if they try to detain you. (Ask, "Am I free to go?" If no, ask "What crime am I suspected of committing?")

## Don't

- **Don't** distract or interfere with the officers doing their job or physically get in the officers' way.
- **Don't** insult or threaten officers, act aggressively, or make any sudden movements.
- **Don't** record secretly. This might upset people around you or police officers, and the legality of doing so is unclear.
- **Don't** resist arrest or run.

# Stop and Film Script

When you Stop and Film, make it known to the officer that you are filming.



Here is a simple script you can use to make it clear that your top priority is the safety of Black Lives:

“ Officer, I am exercising my right to film.

*I appreciate your duty to protect and serve the community, and I am also doing my part. Too many Black Lives have been lost due to police brutality, so I am standing here to:*

- 1) make sure this detainee feels safe, and*
- 2) hold our law enforcement accountable.*

*I realize that not all cops are bad. But I am also not willing to risk walking away to find out later which way this stop went down. Thank you again for your service, and I will stand out of your way, filming while you do your job.* ”

# Stop and Film FAQs

Know your rights and be prepared.

As we've seen in many cases of police brutality and infringement of the First Amendment, not all cops take their oath to protect and serve seriously. These are the cops making it necessary for citizens to Stop and Film. These are the cops that may try to stop you from filming, claim you are obstructing police activity, or even detain you.

In the case you find yourself in any of these situations, stay calm, respectful, and compliant while also stating your rights and asking clarifying questions.

## What do I do if the officer asks me to back up?

Comply with the officer's orders and say aloud, "I'm complying with your orders."

If the officer continues to insist that you are interfering with their activities, ask, "Where would you like me to stand?" With each new order, say aloud, "I'm complying with your orders. I'm going to move there now."

Be slow and methodical with your movements to showcase that you are not a threat. Sudden moves can alarm police officers. With each movement, state what you are doing or where you are going and repeat that you are complying with orders. All of these measures are meant to keep you safe as you stand in solidarity with the detainee, who likely feels even more scared than you.

## **What do I do if the officer asks me to stop filming?**

State that you have a First Amendment right to film or photograph the police officer while they perform their duties in public. Some officers may argue that you are breaking other laws, such as trespassing on private property or obstructing their job by being in the way. Make sure to stay out of the officer's way and make sure you aren't violating any laws. (Note that if you are filming on private property, the right to film is dictated by the property owner.)

## **What do I do if the officer asks me to delete my photos or videos?**

Tell the officer that they do not have a right to delete your photos or videos. This would be obstruction of justice. Destroying evidence is not lawful.

## **What do I do if the detainee's life is at risk and the officer won't stop applying force?**

We are trying to preserve life and root out officers who are applying excessive force. While there is no simple answer here, you can take three steps if the officer is putting the detainee's life at risk:

1. Continue filming.
2. Tell the officer that they are applying excessive force.
3. Ask another bystander to call 9-1-1 to request an ambulance. (Be clear with the dispatcher that there is an officer applying excessive force with a detainee who is not resisting arrest.)
4. Afterwards, file a complaint with the police department for police misconduct.