



## CITY OF PROVIDENCE

### 1.12 WORKPLACE RECORDING AND SURVEILLANCE POLICY

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear standards governing the audio, video, and photographic recording of individuals and activities in the workplace. The City of Providence is committed to maintaining a professional work environment that protects employee privacy, preserves operational integrity, safeguards confidential information, and promotes trust among employees and the public.

While Rhode Island law permits recording with the consent of at least one party, the City retains the authority as an employer to regulate workplace conduct and the use of recording devices while employees are performing their official duties. This policy is intended to ensure that recording activities occur only when authorized and necessary for the performance of official City functions.

#### Scope

This policy applies to all City of Providence employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal employees, interns, fellows, volunteers, contractors, and any other individuals performing work on behalf of the City.

This policy applies while employees are:

- On duty or performing official City business
- Present in City-owned or City-operated facilities
- Using City equipment, vehicles, or systems
- Representing the City in an official capacity

Nothing in this policy shall supersede, modify, or diminish any rights, benefits, or obligations contained within applicable collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) or laws. In the event of a conflict between this policy and a CBA, the CBA shall prevail for covered employees. For employees not covered by a CBA, this policy shall govern.

This policy shall also be interpreted and applied consistently with employees' rights under federal and state labor laws, including employees' rights to engage in protected concerted activity where applicable.

#### Definitions

**Recording:** The capture, storage, or transmission of audio, video, photographic, or digital media of individuals, conversations, meetings, events, or activities using any device.

**Recording Device:** Any device capable of capturing audio, video, or images, including but not limited to smartphones, cameras, body cameras, tablets, laptops, wearable technology, or other electronic devices.

**Authorized Recording:** Recording that is required as part of an employee's official job duties, functions of work performed, or conducted with prior authorization from a department director or other authorized official.

**Official Capacity:** Any period during which an employee is performing work duties, representing the City of Providence, or using City resources.

**Confidential Information:** Information that is protected from unauthorized disclosure, including but not limited to personnel records, protected personal information, health information, investigative materials, legal communications, or other sensitive information.

#### Policy

##### 1. General Prohibition on Workplace Recording



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- A. Employees are prohibited from audio recording, video recording, photographing, or otherwise capturing images or sound of any individual, meeting, workspace, or City operation while performing their official duties unless the recording is expressly authorized under this policy.
  - B. Unauthorized recording of employees, supervisors, constituents, vendors, or members of the public during the course of City operations is strictly prohibited.
2. **Authorized Recording**
- A. Recording may only occur when it is necessary for the performance of official job duties and has been authorized by the employee's department director, supervisor, or another designated authority.
  - B. Examples of authorized recording activities may include:
    1. Public safety body-worn camera usage
    2. Official training recordings
    3. Public meetings or hearings
    4. Authorized investigations
    5. Official City communications or media documentation
    6. Security or surveillance systems installed by the City
  - C. Recording conducted under this section must be limited strictly to the scope necessary to perform the authorized function.
3. **Prohibited Activities**
- A. Employees are prohibited from:
    1. Recording conversations with coworkers, supervisors, or members of the public without authorization.
    2. Recording internal meetings, disciplinary discussions, investigations, or personnel matters.
    3. Recording within areas where confidential or sensitive information may be discussed or stored.
    4. Recording for personal use, entertainment, or social media distribution while on duty.
    5. Sharing, distributing, or publishing recordings obtained during City work without authorization.
    6. Using personal devices to record City business without authorization.
4. **Confidentiality and Security**
- A. Employees must not record, capture, store, or distribute any recording that contains confidential, proprietary, or legally protected information unless expressly authorized.
  - B. Any authorized recordings that contain sensitive information must be handled, stored, retained, and disposed of in accordance with applicable City records retention and information security policies.
5. **Personal Devices**
- A. Employees may not use personal phones, cameras, or other personal recording devices to record City operations, coworkers, or work-related activities while on duty unless explicitly authorized.
  - B. Departments may impose additional restrictions on the use of personal devices where operational security, safety, or confidentiality concerns exist.
6. **Rhode Island Law**
- A. Rhode Island law permits recording when at least one party to the conversation consents. However, this law does not prohibit employers from establishing workplace policies restricting recording during the course of employment.
  - B. Nothing in this policy is intended to conflict with applicable state or federal laws governing protected employee rights.
7. **Compliance**
- A. The City will not utilize recordings that are formed in violation of this policy for the purposes of discipline of employees; however, the City reserves the right to utilize recordings from staff who document and



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record as required by and consistent with their ordinary and customary duties and/or from external parties such as constituents or law enforcement.

- B. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with City disciplinary procedures and applicable collective bargaining agreements, up to and including termination of employment.
- C. Disciplinary action will be considered based on the severity of the violation, including whether the recording involved confidential information, employee privacy violations, operational disruption, or misuse of City information.

### Related Policies:

Information and Systems Security Policy  
Laptop Computer and Mobile Device Policy  
Personal Wireless Devices Policy  
Code of Conduct  
Discipline Policy  
City Records Management Policy

### Other Related Information:

Local 1033 Collective Bargaining Agreement  
Rhode Island Wiretap Act – R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-35-21  
Rhode Island Access to Public Records Act (APRA)