

SHARING VIDEOS OF POLICE VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES



SAFELY. ETHICALLY. EFFECTIVELY.

(ORIGINAL PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Think through the following questions before publicly sharing video of someone being abused or arrested by law enforcement. Whether you filmed, received or found a video online, it's important to understand that sharing it publicly could put you, the filmer, the victim and/or others at risk of harm or retraumatization by exposing their identity or location.

Seek advice from a trusted lawyer or advocacy group about how you can protect your community.

IF POSSIBLE, FIRST SHARE FOOTAGE WITH THE PERSON OR THE FAMILY OF THE PERSON WHO WAS ABUSED, HARASSED OR ARRESTED. THEY SHOULD DECIDE HOW IT'S USED.

WHY AM I SHARING THIS VIDEO?

Be clear about what you want to achieve: Do you want to expose an abuse, counter a problematic narrative, rally support for an individual, etc.? Your intentions will help determine your strategy and guide you from needlessly sharing retraumatizing imagery.

WHEN SHOULD I SHARE THIS VIDEO?

Waiting to share footage until after the police department makes a public statement can expose lies and discrepancies, and it can garner attention. During a high profile protest situation, sharing videos more rapidly and in the moment be an effective strategy as there is already attention on the situation. Regardless, it's important to pause to think through safety. It can also be more impactful to wait and tie the video to specific policy demands or collaborate with other organizing efforts.

ARE THERE ANY IDENTITIES I NEED TO PROTECT (INCLUDING MY OWN)?

Identities can include someone's face, voice, dialect, tattoos, home or business address, license plates, etc. Use YouTube's free blur tool to obscure identifying features from footage before you share. Check out our tutorial for more info: wit.to/HowToYouTubeBlurring

DO I WANT MY NAME ASSOCIATED WITH THE FOOTAGE?

Publishing footage online with your name or social media handles tied to the video can make you vulnerable to online and offline aggressions. It could also result in a media spotlight or legal proceedings. Work with a trusted journalist or advocacy organization to release footage anonymously, but beware that your video's metadata could still be traced to you. If you release footage with a journalist or media outlet, make sure you have a contract that discusses ownership, usage, rights to the footage, etc.

HOW CAN I MAKE MY VIDEO EASIER TO FIND & VERIFY?

Adding visual and written context can help others verify your footage. You can do this by filming landmarks, street signs, stating the time and day, etc. and by providing detailed written descriptions after you upload footage.

Keep titles brief and descriptive. Only use factual information to describe events. Write a description of what happened before, during and after the recording. Always include date, time, city, specific location. Add keywords or "tags" so your video is easier to find.

SHOULD I LIVESTREAM?

Livestreaming can expose people's identities and other sensitive information far more easily than recorded video. Understand the risks before going live. Phones can default to sharing your location. Be aware of what location details you're sharing. Describe what is happening and recap what has happened through factual commentary. Work with a partner to keep an eye on what's happening in the periphery and check on viewers' comments and questions. Consider streaming to a trusted set of viewers, like an attorney or trained legal observers on a private channel instead of publicly to anyone.

HOW DO I PREVENT MY CONTENT FROM BEING TAKEN DOWN?

Familiarize yourself with social media community standards and takedown policies. These are updated regularly. Adding factual details and descriptions to your video can help ensure its intended use. Don't include personal opinions or perceptions, and NEVER use slurs or discriminatory language. If your footage is graphic, write "GRAPHIC IMAGERY" in the video's title and description to alert viewers.

HOW DO I PROTECT MY FOOTAGE?

Remember, social media is not an archive! Backup your footage in at least one separate, secure location. If you edit, do so from a copy and save the original unedited file. Some sites let you save livestreams on their platform, but others delete the video after a set time period. If you think your video contains evidentiary content, download and preserve a copy. Learn how: bit.ly/PreservingLiveVideo