



“Don’t Get Caught Up in an On-Camera Mess”

First Amendment Auditor/Agitator Training

Prepared by the PBCFR Public Information Office

The purpose of this training is to provide guidance on First Amendment laws to PBCFR employees regarding people who are using a phone or a video camera to record an emergency scene and/or responders. In the United States Constitution, the First Amendment allows people the right to take photos and video in public places to record public officials doing public things. The law is the same for both the press and the public. This right to film only applies to public places and **NOT** to private property.

There is currently a movement on-line of self-proclaimed “**First Amendment Auditors**” These ‘auditors’ use cameras to record government officials in public places to audit or test the government employee’s knowledge of this first amendment right. The ‘auditor’ may also attempt to agitate government workers for a reaction on camera. These videos are often posted on-line for attention. This training provides first responders with the proper manner in which to handle situations where an auditor is impeding work or antagonizing emergency workers.

1. THE LAW

- This Fire Engineering article explaining the first amendment laws and how they specifically pertain to the fire service: [Fire Law: The First Amendment & Emergency Scene Photos | Firehouse](#)

2. DON'Ts

- You **CANNOT** ask the person to stop recording
- **DO NOT...** get caught in a dispute or argument with them on camera.

3. DO...

- **AVOID CONFRONTATION/ARGUING**
- **IGNORE THE CAMERAS/DESIGNATE ONE PERSON TO MOVE THE INDIVIDUAL OUT OF THE SCENE AREAS IF NECESSARY**
- **USE SCENE TAPE**
- You **CAN RESTRICT** where they stand, and you can **ASK THEM TO MOVE IF...**
 - ✓ IF... they are interfering with your ability to do your job
 - ✓ IF... it is necessary to move them for scene safety and security
 - ✓ IF... they’ve entered an exclusionary zone or an area behind scene tape