



Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department Policy
Audio/Visual Recording and Photography Policy

Effective Date:

Upon Approval

1. AUTHORITY

Article VI, Section 7a, City Charter of the City of Houston.

2. POLICY PURPOSE

To inform Administration and Regulatory Affairs (ARA) employees under what conditions use of recording devices may be permitted.

3. SCOPE

3.1. This policy applies to:

3.1.1. All recordings, to include images made by ARA employees and their visitors and guests while on City premises.

3.1.2. Any form of recording, whether audio or video as well as images such as photography.

3.2. This policy does not apply to:

3.2.1. Recordings required to be made in the course and scope of an employee's duties or as required by statute or the City of Houston Code of Ordinances.

3.2.2. The use of recording devices at public meetings in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 551.023.

3.2.3. Recording equipment used in conjunction with building and premises security operations.

4. DEFINITIONS

Recording Device: Any electronic or other device used to capture audio and/or visual information and photographs. This includes, but is not limited to, computers, cell phones, cameras, tape recorders and video cameras.

5. POLICY DETAILS

5.1. The use of an inconspicuous recording device by any employee is prohibited. This does not prohibit the use of a conspicuous device in compliance with Section 6 below.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1. Use of a Recording Device

6.1.1. Prior to use, an employee who wishes to use a recording device shall advise all other parties of the employee's intent to record and must receive approval from all individuals who will be recorded.

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- 6.1.2. If permission to record is denied or withdrawn, the employee using the recording device shall deactivate it immediately.
- 6.1.3. If additional individuals arrive in the vicinity where a recording device is in use, the employee using the device shall inform them of its use and give the individuals the opportunity to remove themselves.
- 6.1.4. The employee who wishes to use the recording device shall ensure that each individual who will be recorded has verbally confirmed their approval, which approval must be reflected on the recording if the recording is audio in nature.
- 6.1.5. Recording devices shall be kept in plain sight at all times when in use.
- 6.2. It is a violation of this policy to secretly record within the workplace.
- 6.3. Recordings made in violation of this policy shall not be introduced by an employee as evidence in any meeting of or hearing before the civil service commission, independent hearing examiner, grievance examiner, or grievance committee.

7. COMPLIANCE

- 7.1. Grievance hearings will be recorded as provided in the Code of Ordinances, civil service statutes, or any labor agreements.
- 7.2. Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including indefinite suspension.