

# BASIC PRACTICES

## CAPTURING, STORING & SHARING VIDEO EVIDENCE



Filming for human rights can be dangerous. It can put you, the people you are filming and the communities you are filming in at risk. Carefully assess the risks before you press “record”.

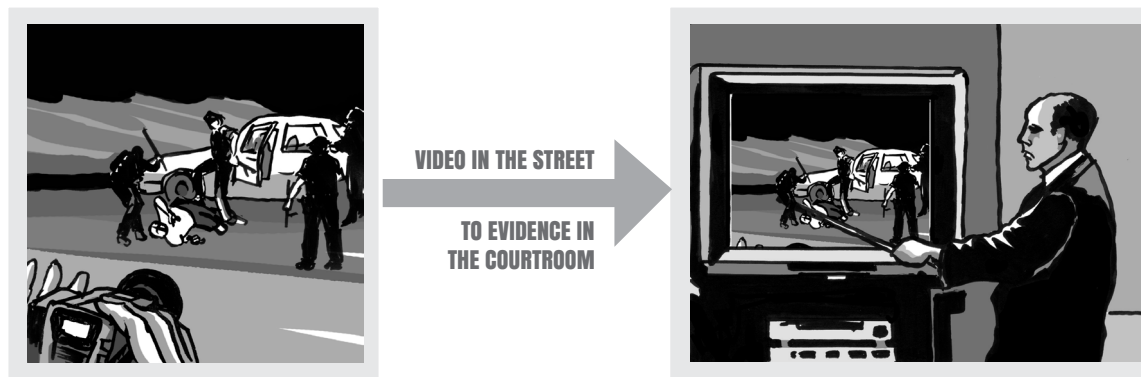
Do your best to implement the guidance below, but understand that nothing stated in this guide is absolute and you should modify the practices to fit your needs. When possible, seek support from local experts. Even if you cannot fully implement this guidance, your footage may still provide valuable information that could lead human rights organizations and advocates to answers and, in turn, to the protection of our basic human rights.

## INTRODUCTION

Video captured by eyewitnesses and on-the-ground human rights activists can be instrumental in drawing attention to human rights violations and support calls for policy change. But videographers often want their footage to do more. They hope that footage exposing abuse can help bring about justice in courts of law. And it can.

In many situations, eyewitnesses and on-the-ground human rights activists are better positioned to collect evidence of human rights abuse than professional investigators. This is because investigators often arrive after-the-fact when the violence has stopped and the evidence has deteriorated or is gone.

However, while citizen video often provides useful clues about what took place and who might be responsible, the quality seldom passes the higher bar needed to be used as evidence in a court of law. The good news is this: with slight modifications, the footage citizens and activists often risk their lives to capture can serve as evidence in criminal and civil justice processes.



## GOAL

The goal here is to introduce basic practices which will help ensure that your video can be used to support the process of bringing perpetrators to justice and freeing the wrongly accused.

These practices are primarily for eyewitnesses and activists who:

- Find themselves in a situation where they can and choose to record human rights violations as they happen, or in their immediate aftermath; and
- Want to share limited amounts of footage with investigators and lawyers who could use it in an investigation. If you have collected a large number of video files that you need to organize and manage, you should also review WITNESS' *Activists' Guide to Archiving Video* to learn more about the longer-term preservation of your footage.

We hope that after reviewing the basic practices here, you will want to learn more advanced practices. To do so, visit [vae.witness.org](http://vae.witness.org)



# PART ONE: GET READY TO FILM

## STEP 1

### Determine Your Role

If you are an **Intentional Documenter** and plan to be in a situation where you expect to film human rights violations:

- **Know your rights before you press record.** Rights vary from country-to-country and from city-to-city. Find out as much as possible about what you can and cannot legally film.
- **Protect your contacts.** If you plan to be in a situation where your filming device could be confiscated, then delete or encrypt names of contacts, call logs, text messages, photographs, videos and audio files in advance. Consider using a different device that does not have personal information on it.
- **Learn more.** The more you know about filming techniques, safe-guarding, organizing, managing and sharing your footage, the easier it will be to film safely, effectively and ethically.

If you are an **Accidental Documenter**:

If you unexpectedly became an eyewitness and captured valuable human rights footage that you are wondering what to do with, skip to PART 3: SAFEGUARD YOUR FOOTAGE on page 10.

## STEP 2

### Security Assessment

Safety comes first. If it's too unsafe to film, don't film, even if you intentionally planned to document human rights violations or accidentally found yourself in the wrong place at the right time. The answer to whether or not it's safe will rarely be black and white. It will be a judgment call that only you can make. If you decide to film, try to follow the basic practices outlined below, or determine how to modify them to the situation you're filming in.

PHYSICAL  
SECURITY



DIGITAL  
SECURITY



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you keep sensitive media or contacts on your computer, learn more about protecting your files here: [securityinabox.org/chapter-4](https://securityinabox.org/chapter-4)

If you're already using PGP for your email, you can also use it to encrypt your files; try GPGTools for Mac or Gpg4win for Windows.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

See the "Assessing and Responding to Risks" guide from the Committee to Protect Journalists [bit.ly/CPJ\\_AssessRisks](https://bit.ly/CPJ_AssessRisks)

## STEP 3

### Determine Which Images to Film

To hold someone accountable for a crime, lawyers must prove:

- **What** crime was committed;
- **Who** committed the crime;
- **How** the perpetrator committed the crime (i.e. whether it was with their own hands, if they planned it, ordered the crime, etc.).

Citizens and activists are often well situated to capture footage of a crime being committed, but it is much more difficult to document who committed the crime and how they did it. Investigators and lawyers spend the majority of their time trying to prove the latter, so while footage documenting the commission of crimes is valuable, capturing the “Who” and “How” is also important for long-term justice and accountability. This is especially true in situations where there are mass atrocities and systemic human rights violations.



## Documenting the “What”

Video documenting the execution or the aftermath of a crime is called “crime-based evidence.” Here are several examples of footage that could serve as crime-based evidence.

Video footage of:

- Military forces torturing a civilian and of the injuries endured after the torture stopped;
- Bulldozers unlawfully destroying homes and the damage caused after the bulldozers have left the scene;
- Police placing a suspect in an illegal chokehold and images of the person after he died from the hold;
- Airstrikes on hospitals and their subsequent destruction after the strikes have ended;
- Children in military camps being trained for warfare;
- Drill rigs illegally placed on indigenous lands drilling for oil.

Capturing the “What” is somewhat instinctual. You see something that is wrong, point the camera toward it and press record. This, in part, is why there is a flood of crime-based video. Capturing evidence of the “Who” and “How” is much less intuitive and harder to do. Let’s take a look at techniques that can help you.



## Documenting the “Who” and “How”

Video footage that includes clues about the “Who” and “How” is often referred to as “linkage evidence” because the evidence “links” the perpetrator to the crime. While it may be impossible to use video to determine exactly who committed a crime and how they did it, video can provide important clues that investigators and lawyers can piece together with other sources of evidence – such as documents or witness testimony – to figure out who should be held accountable even if the perpetrator is far away from the scene of the crime.

Sometimes documenting the “Who” and “How” is easy to capture with video. For example, you might be able to film:

- The face of a soldier as he repeatedly beats a civilian;
- The face of the bulldozer operator as he destroys homes;
- The badge number and name plate of the officer who is holding a suspect in an illegal chokehold that led to death.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

See “Filming Linkage Evidence” at  
[bit.ly/  
WITNESSLibrary\\_VaE](http://bit.ly/WITNESSLibrary_VaE)

Sometimes however, it's much harder. Here are a few of the challenges:

- Video can't show us the identity of the pilot who is flying the plane that is dropping the bombs, or the identity of the person who directed the pilot to target hospitals;
- We may see the child soldiers in the training camps but may not see their trainers or commanders;
- We don't know who ordered the drill rigs to be placed illegally on indigenous lands because we only see the rigs.

Linkage evidence is crucial. As a citizen witness or human rights activist on the ground, you are uniquely placed to gather linkage evidence. Though filming linkage evidence isn't hard, understanding how to capture it is more complicated than capturing crime-based footage.

WHAT: Possible Crime-Based Evidence	WHO & HOW: Possible Linkage Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torture in progress</li> <li>• Fatalities</li> <li>• Injuries</li> <li>• Persons being beaten by officials</li> <li>• Damage to civilian property</li> <li>• Damage to cultural objects</li> <li>• Children bearing arms or participating in military activities</li> <li>• Hate speeches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police formations at a protest and/or troop movements</li> <li>• Badge numbers and uniforms</li> <li>• Passports or other official identification documents</li> <li>• License plates of official vehicles</li> <li>• Military equipment (including serial numbers)</li> <li>• Speeches</li> <li>• Checkpoints</li> <li>• The exterior of occupied facilities</li> <li>• The layout of facilities once occupied and then abandoned</li> <li>• Communications equipment - satellites dishes, radios, etc.</li> <li>• Video of documents that can't be taken because of security risks so the contents are filmed instead</li> </ul>

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

See "Developing a Collection Plan" to learn how to strategically capture higher value footage at [bit.ly/WITNESSLibrary](http://bit.ly/WITNESSLibrary)  
VaE



# PART TWO: PRESS “RECORD”

## STEP 1

### Record Date, Time & Location

- Ensure your camera or cell phone is set to the correct date, time and GPS location so the digital metadata is recorded.
- Record your voice saying the date, time and location.
- If you need to film anonymously, write the time, date and location on a piece of paper and hold it up in front of the camera for 10 seconds. You can also film anything that shows the date, time and location, such as a clock, the front page of a newspaper, a street sign, landmarks or geographic features.

#### about metadata

There is no single legal definition of metadata. Loosely defined, metadata is simply "data about data". For our purposes here, we are defining digital metadata as information about a file created by an electronic device that is automatically stored and is often not visible to the user. Another way to think about it is as the digital footprint that is left behind. This invisible footprint includes such information as date, time, location, what device was used and even a record of changes made to the file.

#### why it's important

Metadata can make your video easier for researchers, reporters or investigators to verify that your video footage was filmed when and where you say it was. For more information see "How to Capture Metadata and Documentation" at: [archiveguide.witness.org/create/what-metadata-capture](https://archiveguide.witness.org/create/what-metadata-capture).

## STEP 2

### Document “Who”

Use the camera microphone or a pen and paper to record the names and contact information for the:

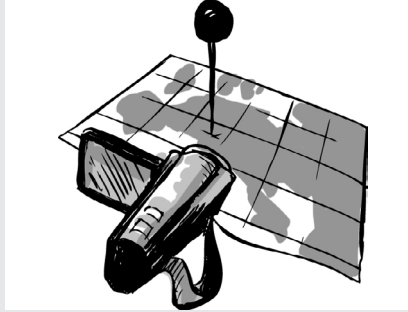
- Person filming;
- People being filmed, and;
- Other people on scene who may have information about the events that took place.



WHEN?



WHERE?



WHO?



## STEP 3

### Film Strategically and Logically

Your goal when filming is to enable those who are not present to visualize the events that took place. While filming, ask yourself, “If I give this footage to someone not familiar with the location, could they summarize what happened and draw an accurate map of the scene based only on the information in my video?”

You want to be able to answer, “Yes!”

Be conscious and purposeful about what you film. Activists often capture the “What” but not always the “Who” and “How”. Consider filling out a “Collection Planning” form to help you strategically determine what footage you will need to capture to give viewers a clear sense of the events that took place.

Since every situation is different, there are no absolute rules, but below are the key, basic filming techniques that will help ensure your video is understandable and informative.

For more  
information

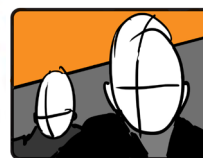
See “Developing a  
Collection Plan” at:  
[bit.ly/WITNESSLibrary\\_VaE](http://bit.ly/WITNESSLibrary_VaE)



WIDE

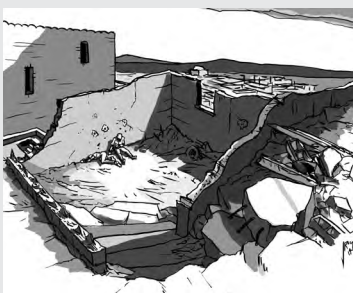


MEDIUM



CLOSE UP

FROM ABOVE



HORIZON WITH SUN OR MOON



LANDMARK





- It is best to film the entire location continuously. However, if the incident is too large, complex or dangerous to do so you can start and stop the recording. In this case, try recording each new clip by pointing the camera at the same location you were filming when you stopped. In other words, overlap the shots.
- Include the following shots:
  - A very slow 360-degree pan to provide context and show what is happening behind the scene.
  - Wide establishing shots to provide an easily understandable layout of the crime scene and to assist in verifying time, date and location.
  - Medium shots to establish the location of the evidence in the crime scene and the relationship of one piece of evidence to another.
  - Close-up shots to show key details and identify people at the scene.
- If possible, film the shots listed above from multiple sides of the incident scene.
- Hold all your shots for 10 seconds or more. Move the camera slowly when you change your position or when you zoom in or out. Avoid fast or jerky movements. When possible, use a tripod, monopod or even surface to stabilize the camera.

## STEP 4

### Written Documentation

If you were unable to add basic information to the video recording itself, then you should create a separate document that summarizes the key information about your footage. Be sure to do this while the details are fresh in your mind. Even though this can be time consuming, providing thorough written documentation can significantly increase the chances that your video will be used as evidence. The summary information, often referred to as a “Camera Report”, can be handwritten or done on a computer and saved in a folder with the video. Always include:

- Date and time you wrote the summary;
- Date, time and location of the filming;
- Names and contact information for the:
  - Person filming;
  - People being filmed;
  - Other people on scene who may have information about the events that took place.
- A short, factual summary of what is shown in the video. Leave out unsupported opinions, misinformation and exaggerations;
- Any safety information or security restrictions.

**For more  
information**

Learn more about  
Camera Reports at:  
[bit.ly/WITNESS](http://bit.ly/WITNESS)  
[Library\\_VaE](http://Library_VaE)

## KEY POINT

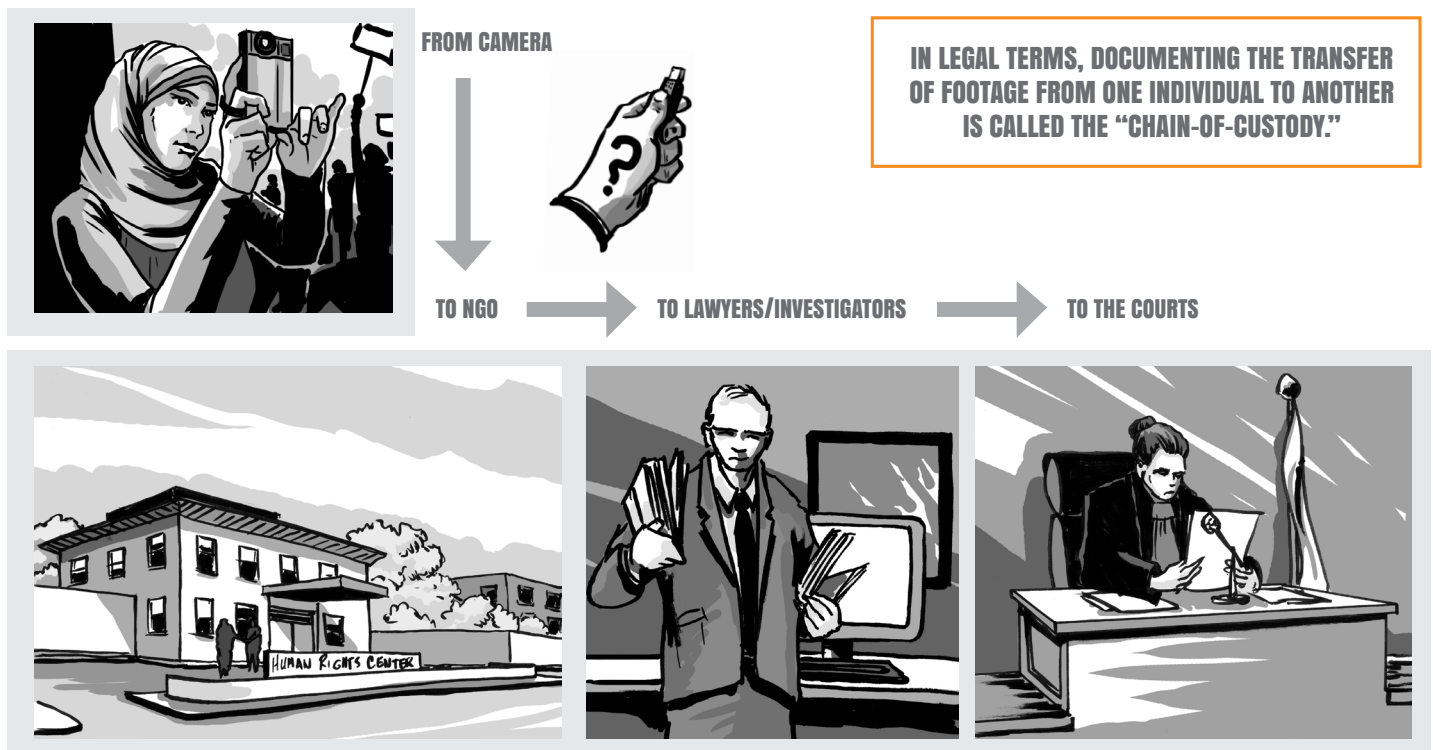
**WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION MATTERS!** Even if you include basic information in the video recording, a separate written summary can be helpful. This additional documentation will make your video stand out among the thousands of videos captured and shared every day by citizens and activists, and it will help human rights researchers and investigators as they review the content and determine whether or not your footage will help them. In short, the easier you make it for the reviewers, the more likely they are to watch your video.

# PART THREE: SAFEGUARD YOUR FOOTAGE

The steps below are for eyewitnesses and human rights activists that have small amounts of footage that need to be protected for a short period of time, until the videos can be handed over to an appropriate person or organization for longer-term safekeeping or until an investigation is launched. If you or your organization has a larger body of footage that you need to organize, manage or safeguard for the foreseeable future, see WITNESS' [Activists' Guide to Archiving Video](#).

**WHY?** Protecting your video is essential if you want it to be used as a part of the judicial process. It's essential because to use a video in court, an attorney must always prove that the video file was not edited or manipulated. In some cases, the attorney will also need to show how the video got from the videographer to an investigator, then to a lawyer, then to a court. In legal terms this is called the "Chain-of-Custody".

If your video is not properly protected, the trustworthiness of your footage can be called into question. The basic steps below will help you protect the integrity of your original file by preventing it from being edited or digitally manipulated, getting lost due to equipment failure or being taken into the hands of someone who could destroy or misuse it.



## STEP 1

### Protect Your Media in the Field

Come up with a plan to keep your memory cards safe from physical damage and from those who might confiscate your footage. While in the field, consider practices such as:

- Swapping out the used card with a blank card and hiding the used one;
- Creating an immediate backup to a drive that you carry with you;
- Uploading the footage immediately to a secure server;
- Storing memory cards in sturdy, dust-free card cases when not in use.

## STEP 2

### Protect Your Media in Your Home or Office

Come up with a plan to keep your footage safe after you return from the field. Consider practices such as:

- Setting the write-protection lock on your memory card before transferring your media;
- Saving the original file by transferring it from your card to a hard drive without processing the video in any way. Do not run it through special software or change the file format, file name or file structure;
- Backing up the original file at least once and twice if possible. Once copied, don't alter the original file in any way;
- Keeping backup copies on separate devices and in a separate physical location from your primary copy;
- Keeping storage media secure by limiting physical and digital access to only those who need it.

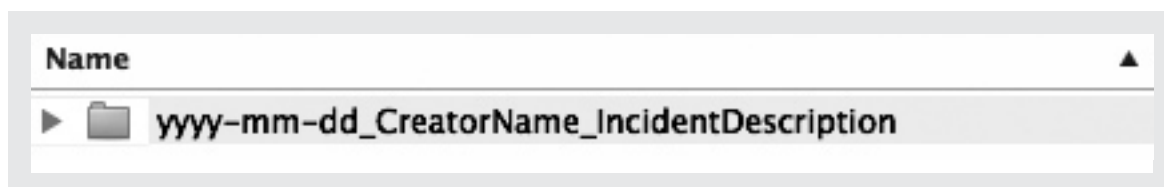
**For more  
information**

See **Keeping Files Intact (and Proving It!)** at [archiveguide.witness.org/transfer/keeping-files-intact](https://archiveguide.witness.org/transfer/keeping-files-intact)

## STEP 3

### Organize Your Videos

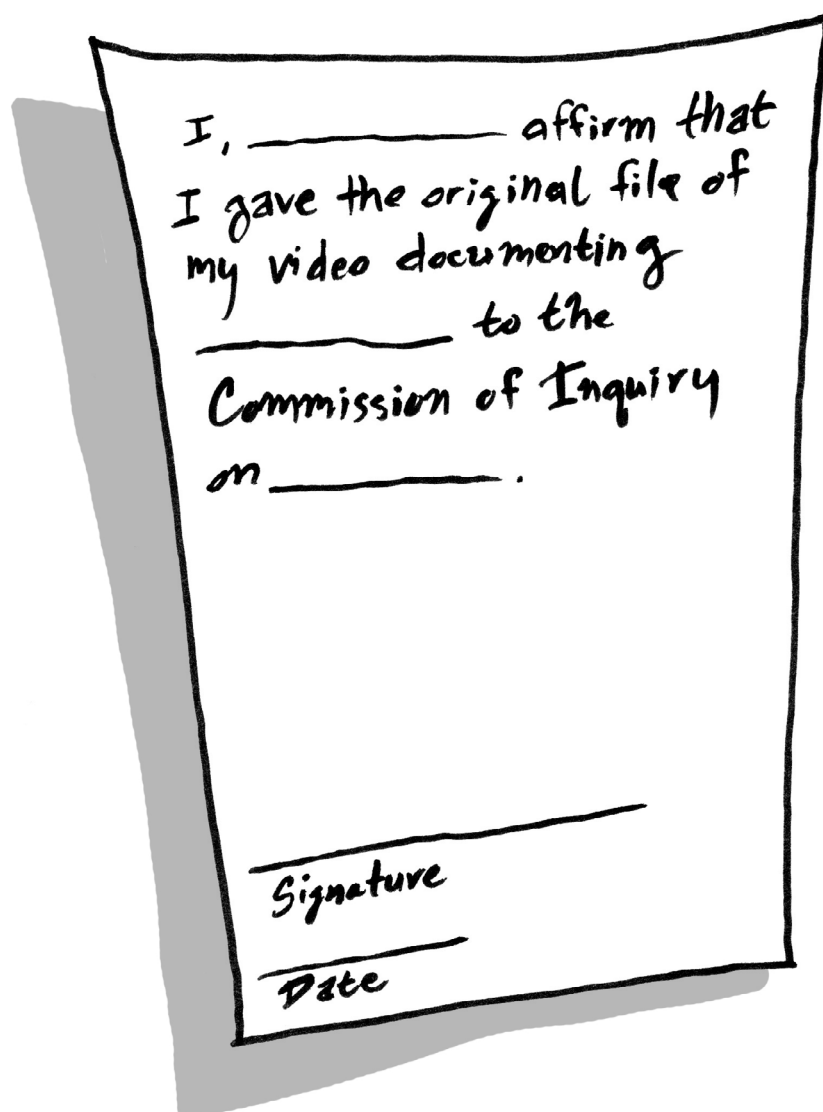
If you would like to organize videos offloaded from your camera, organize them in folders by date and creator. Again, do not alter the format, filenames or directory structure of the original video. Name your folders in a standardized way so that you can easily sort and identify them. For example, yyyy-mm-dd\_CreatorName\_IncidentDescription.



## STEP 4

## Track Your Videos

Use a spreadsheet or database to keep track of where you store the footage and who you share it with. In order for your video to be used as part of an investigation, you will need to give it to trusted human rights researchers or investigators. When you give the footage to another person or organization, they may ask you to sign a form that documents the hand off of the footage. In legal terms, the form documents the “chain-of-custody”. The information requested will vary, but you will most likely need to verify that you recorded the video and that you have not altered the video file.

SET  
PRIORITIES

All courts require that lawyers prove that the video shows what the lawyer says it shows. Only some courts require that a lawyer prove the chain-of-custody. If you must prioritize, focus on the protection of the file's integrity over keeping close track of the path of the video. However, it's best if you can do both.

# PART FOUR: SHARE YOUR VIDEO

## KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

### IS IT SAFE TO SHARE YOUR VIDEOS AND WITH WHOM?

#### DECISION #1: IS IT SAFE TO SHARE YOUR FOOTAGE?

Assessing safety risks should happen both before and after filming a human rights incident. After filming, review the footage to determine whether or not anyone depicted in the video could be endangered if certain people saw the video. Would you (or the videographer if it was someone else) be at risk if it were known that you filmed the situation? Would you be at risk if your involvement in distributing the video were revealed? Again, this will be a judgment call that only you can make.

**DECISION #2: SHARE PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY?** If there are risks involved in sharing the video, consider only sharing it privately with trusted individuals or organizations such as allied human rights organizations, investigators or attorneys. If there are no foreseeable risks and you want to make the footage accessible to as many people as possible, follow the tips below to share video effectively on an online video-hosting platform such as YouTube.

## SHARING PUBLICLY

### GOALS

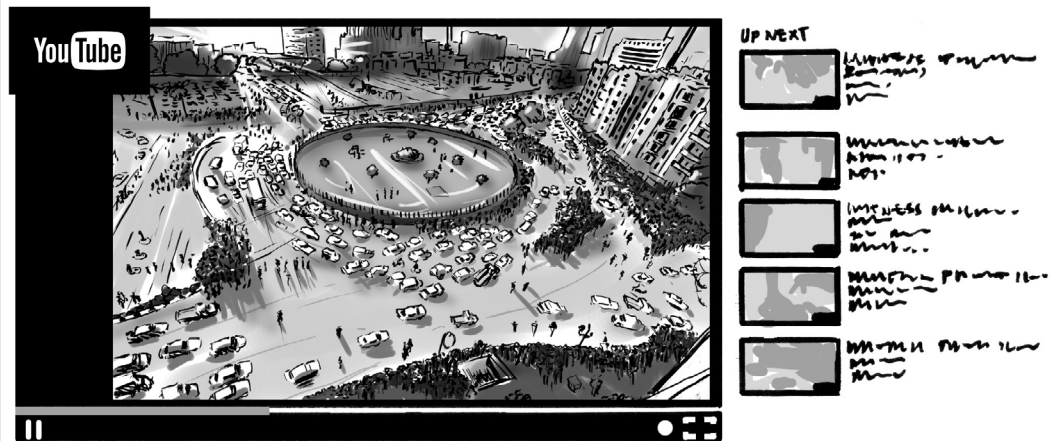
If you decide it's safe – and strategic – to share the video clips online, follow these basic practices so that:

- A journalist, researcher or investigator is able to search, find, understand and verify your videos; and
- The online platform you are using understands that the video contains informative human rights content and will be less likely to take down the video.

## STEP 1

## Title

When uploading a video to an online platform, include a short title that includes the date, specific location, city, country and a few key, descriptive words about the video's content.



**Graphic Human Rights Imagery:  
Deadly clashes between protesters and authorities  
Cairo, Egypt, Jan. 25, 2011**



s' Channel

Subscribe 20

85,003

+ Add to Share ... More

80 9

Uploaded on Jan 25, 2011

Authorities and protesters clash as thousands of Egyptians begin to gather in Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt to protest against President Hosni Mubarak's regime. Recorded on Tuesday January 25, 2011, beginning at 9:15 am.

SHOW MORE

## STEP 2

## Description

Add a factual description that repeats the time, date, specific location, city and country and includes a factual summary of what is shown in the video. Add context that will help viewers understand the video, such as what happened immediately before or after the recording. Leave out unsupported opinions, misinformation and exaggerations. If safe, include the name and contact information of the videographer or the videographer's organization.

## KEY POINTS

### INDICATE THAT THE VIDEO INCLUDES HUMAN RIGHT IMAGERY

If the footage is graphic then include, “Graphic Human Rights Imagery” in the video’s title. This will:

- Alert viewers that the video may be violent or disturbing, and
- Alert the online platform that the video clip may contain valuable human rights footage. Without this warning, YouTube and other platforms may remove the video for violating their community guidelines that prohibit users from posting shocking, sensational or disrespectful content that has no public value.

## STEP 3

### Tag

Again, repeat the date, time, specific location, city and country then add words that describe the content. For example words like: “human rights”, “eviction”, “arrest”, “excessive force”, “shelling”, “protest”, “speech”, “child soldiers”, “checkpoint”, “uniforms”, “oil spill”, “torture” or “refugee”. The tags must be unbiased and factual.

## KEY POINTS

### ACCURACY IS ESSENTIAL

If you want your videos to be used for evidence, do not add false dates, locations or tags to increase the number of times your video comes up in searches or for any other reason.

**For more  
information**

See the YouTube blog titled “Context Is King: Share Your Story” at: <http://bit.ly/ContextIsKing>

## STEP 4

### Keep the Original File

Video sites such as YouTube are great for sharing videos, but should not be used as a place to save the original copy of a video because:

- Videos uploaded to platforms like YouTube are optimized for web streaming, meaning the original video is compressed and stripped of valuable information – the metadata – embedded in the file;
- You cannot retrieve your original file from sites like YouTube once it has been uploaded it because only the copy that was optimized for web streaming will be available; and
- YouTube and sites like it can take your footage down without your permission.



## SHARING WITH TRUSTED INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

### STEP 1

#### Learn

Sharing video footage and information with human rights organizations, investigators, law enforcement officers and courts triggers rights and responsibilities. These rights and responsibilities vary depending upon who you share the information with. Before giving footage to an intermediary for safekeeping, make sure to choose an intermediary that:

- You trust;
- Has the skills, resources and infrastructure to keep your video secure, intact and reliable; and
- Will respect (and even put in writing) the specific use of the footage, especially if it poses security risks for you, the people on camera or the community in which you filmed in.

#### For more information

Learn how to select an archive to share your footage with at [archiveguide.witness.org/preserve/working-archive](https://archiveguide.witness.org/preserve/working-archive)

### STEP 2

#### Decide How to Provide the Original File

Provide your trusted allies with the original video that is in no way altered. If the person or organization you are sharing footage with is located nearby and accessible, the most secure way to share your video is to go in person (or send a trusted ally) and transfer the video from your computer or hard drive onto theirs.

Often times this is not the case and the only practical way to get the footage to your ally is to transfer it online. If you are in a high-risk situation where uploading a file could be dangerous, there are fairly secure options to transfer footage (see the tips below on “Using Technology to Safe-Guard Your Videos”). New methods for transferring footage are being developed all the time, so it’s best to discuss the security risks with your ally before selecting a service.

#### For more information

For information about secure digital transfer options available see [bit.ly/WITNESSBlog\\_Tech](https://bit.ly/WITNESSBlog_Tech)

### STEP 3

#### Provide Supplementary Information

Whenever possible, also provide a printed or electronic summary of:

- Time, date and specific location the video was captured at;
- A concise factual summary of what is shown in the video;
- The names and contact information for the videographer, persons filmed and others who may have valuable information about the incident and are willing to speak to an NGO or an investigator; and
- Any security information letting your allies know what information is confidential and what can be shared with others.

## OPTIONAL

### Consider Using Technology to Safe-Guard Your Videos

While it's not mandatory to use technology tools to enhance the evidentiary value of your video, helpful new tools are being developed all the time. These tools, combined with your hands-on field skills, can strengthen the trustworthiness of your video.

Here are a few options to explore:

#### **Capture: Film and add context to your video in the field**

- Storymaker: Android app with training and templates to help you safely and effectively capture video on the go - [storymaker.cc](http://storymaker.cc)
- InformaCam: Android app for creating secure and verified video via embedded metadata to ensure the footage captured has enhanced evidentiary value - [guardianproject.info/informa](http://guardianproject.info/informa)
- eyeWitness: Android camera app that records and embeds metadata to facilitate authentication of footage and its use by courts - [eyewitnessproject.org](http://eyewitnessproject.org)
- Taggly: App for Apple and Android devices that will imprint your media with a metadata watermark - [tagg.ly](http://tagg.ly)
- Anker Astro: Line of external batteries that keep your devices running in the field - [goo.gl/pyYsDM](http://goo.gl/pyYsDM)

#### **Store: Keep your media safe and organized**

- Seagate Wireless Plus: Portable hard drive that's battery powered and Wifi enabled, giving you extra storage on the go - [goo.gl/IXwOsZ](http://goo.gl/IXwOsZ)
- SyncMe: Android app that automatically syncs your files. Pair it with Seagate to continually back up your media in the field - [goo.gl/kf3sqY](http://goo.gl/kf3sqY)
- Adobe Bridge: Media browsing tool that helps you organize your video, add tags, and view and edit metadata - [creative.adobe.com/products/bridge](http://creative.adobe.com/products/bridge)
- Activists' Guide to Archiving Video: WITNESS guide that outlines tools and best practices for storing and cataloging your videos - [archiveguide.witness.org](http://archiveguide.witness.org)
- 

#### **Share: Make sure your media is safe and private when you share with others**

- Bittorrent Sync: Direct transfer from one device to another is a good option for secure sharing in low bandwidth contexts - [getsync.com](http://getsync.com)
- SpiderOak: Easy-to-use cloud storage with end-to-end encryption that helps make file sharing more secure - [spideroak.com](http://spideroak.com)
- BoxCryptor: Free service that encrypts your files before you upload them to Dropbox or other cloud service sites - [boxcryptor.com](http://boxcryptor.com)

The list is constantly changing and growing. Learn about the newest tools at [blog.witness.org/tag/technology/](http://blog.witness.org/tag/technology/).

## A BIT ABOUT CURATION

If you come across a video online and feel it would be valuable to share the video more broadly by including it in a report, article, playlist, etc., then it's essential to:

- **Verify the video's content.** Many videos are staged, edited, or shared with false descriptions so as to incite hatred or violence, or undermine credible footage.
- **Evaluate the security risks of sharing the video.** The person who uploaded the video may or may not have assessed safety concerns or may not have intended for the video to be shared widely. If the video has the potential of putting individuals at risk, use a video editor or the YouTube face blur function to protect the anonymity of those individuals: [bit.ly/YouTubeFaceBlur](https://bit.ly/YouTubeFaceBlur).
- **Provide background information.** Sharing a link to the original uploaded video will help investigators trust its authenticity and maintain any metadata embedded in the video. If, however, you decide to save a copy of the video and re-upload a new version online, include a link to the original in the description area. This will enable human rights researchers or investigators to contact the original uploader of the video. If you don't include a link to the original upload, add any information you do have about the video that is safe to share, and an explanation of why you believe the video to be authentic.
- **Follow Basic Practices.** Follow the guidance above on adding a title, description and tags.
- **State your intentions.** Provide a concise statement in the description summarizing why you believe it's important to share the video more broadly.
- **Retain a copy.** Online videos may be removed by their uploader or the online hosting platforms. If the video potentially contains valuable documentation, download it and retain an archived copy, plus a backup.

### For more information

Learn more about  
the verification and  
curation  
of human rights  
video at [hrc.witness.  
org/resources](https://hrc.witness.org/resources)

# PART FIVE: LEARN MORE

Now that you know the basic practices for enhancing the evidentiary value of your video, we hope you will be interested in learning more advanced practices for:

- Preparing to collect video as evidence;
- Filming so your video has evidentiary value;
- Protecting, managing and organizing your videos;
- Sharing your videos;
- Verifying the videos filmed by others; and
- Using tech tools to enhance the evidentiary value of the video at every stage of the process.

For more information on these topics, visit [bit.ly/WITNESSLibrary\\_VaE](https://bit.ly/WITNESSLibrary_VaE) or [vae.witness.org](https://vae.witness.org).

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**PRINT OUT THE MINI GUIDE BELOW AND CARRY IT  
WITH YOU FOR EASY REFERENCE.**

# BASIC PRACTICES 1: GETTING READY TO FILM

IMPLEMENT THESE BASIC PRACTICES TO ENHANCE THE EVIDENTIARY VALUE OF THE VIDEO YOU CAPTURE.

## STEP 1

Know your rights before you press record.

## STEP 2

Protect, encrypt or delete sensitive personal information and contacts on your filming device in case it's confiscated.

## STEP 3

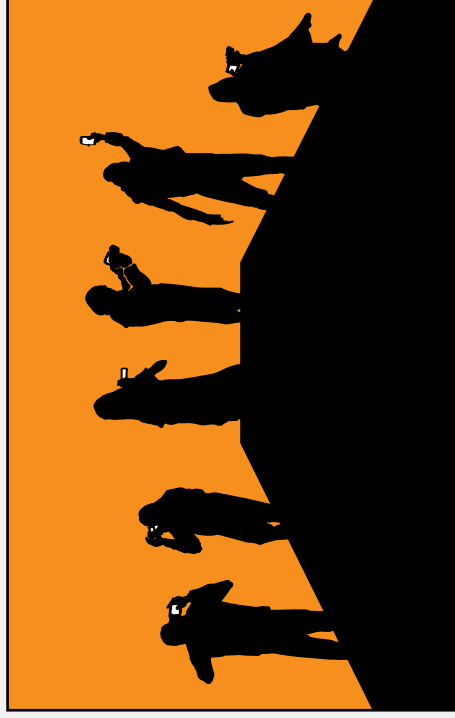
complete a security assessment to protect yourself and those you are filming.

## STEP 4

determine which images you should film (see other side).

## STEP 5

Learn more at [bit.ly/WITNESSLibrary\\_vae](http://bit.ly/WITNESSLibrary_vae).



VIDEO AS EVIDENCE: **MINI GUIDE** [VAE.WITNESS.ORG](http://VAE.WITNESS.ORG)

# DETERMINE WHAT TO FILM

To hold someone accountable for a crime, lawyers must prove:

What crime was committed?

Who committed the crime?

How the perpetrator committed the crime?

Capture images and details that provide information about  
“WHAT”, “WHO” & “HOW”

## Example Images to Prove “WHAT”

- A death caused by gunshot
- Persons being beaten or tortured
- Injuries resulting from abuses
- Damage to civilian property
- Damage to cultural objects
- Children bearing arms or participating in military activities

## Example Images to Prove “WHO” & “HOW”

- Police formations at a protest
- Uniforms and badge numbers
- License plates of official vehicles
- Military equipment & serial numbers
- Speeches

VIDEO AS EVIDENCE: **MINI GUIDE** [VAE.WITNESS.ORG](http://VAE.WITNESS.ORG)

# BASIC PRACTICES 2:

## FILMING FOR EVIDENCE

IMPLEMENT THESE BASIC PRACTICES TO ENHANCE THE EVIDENTIARY VALUE OF THE VIDEO YOU CAPTURE.

### STEP 1

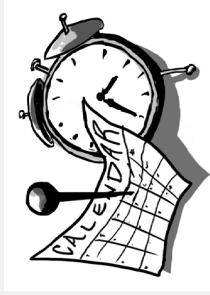
**Set the correct date, time and GPS location on your device.**

### STEP 2

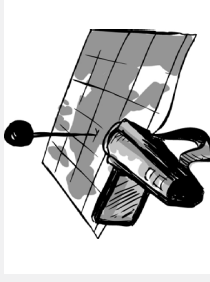
**Use the camera microphone and/or written documentation to record:**

- Date, time and location
- Who is filming
- Who and/or what is being filmed
- Others on scene with information

WHEN?



WHERE?



WHO?



### STEP 3

**Film strategically and logically:**

- ✓ Film continuously
- ✓ Film a variety of shots from the incident scene
- ✓ Hold all shots for 10 seconds or more
- ✓ Move the camera slowly
- ✓ When possible, use a tripod, monopod or level surface to stabilize the camera

### STEP 4

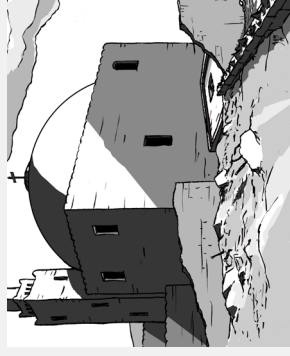
**create written documentation that summarizes key information, including security information.**

# FILMING FOR EVIDENCE:

## SHOT LIST



LANDMARK



360°



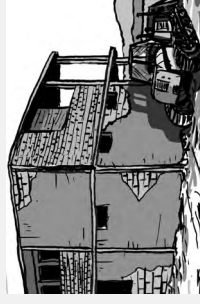
WIDE



OVERVIEW



MEDIUM



CLOSE UP





# BASIC PRACTICES 3:

## SAFEGUARD YOUR FOOTAGE

### STEP 1

#### Protect your media in the field:

- Keep your memory cards safe from physical damage and confiscation;
- Swap out the used card with a blank card and hide the used one;
- Create an immediate backup to a drive that you carry with you or to a secure server.



### STEP 2

#### Protect your media in your home or office:

- Set the write-protection lock on your memory card before transferring your media;
- Back up the original file at least once, twice if possible, once copied, don't alter the original file in any way; and
- Keep backup copies on separate devices and in a separate physical location from your primary copy.



### STEP 3

#### Organize your videos once you are out of the field:

Do not alter the format, filenames or directory structure. Instead, place in folders with standardized names.



### STEP 4

#### Track your videos

Use a spreadsheet or database to keep track of where you store the footage and who you share it with.

Find more in-depth information about archiving footage at [archive.witness.org](http://archive.witness.org).

VIDEO AS EVIDENCE: **MINI GUIDE** [VAE.WITNESS.ORG](http://VAE.WITNESS.ORG)

# BASIC PRACTICES 4:

## SHARE YOUR VIDEO PRIVATELY

### STEP 1

#### Research

Sharing video footage and information with human rights organizations, investigators, law enforcement officers and courts triggers rights and responsibilities. These rights and responsibilities vary, so learn about this before sharing. Choose an intermediary you trust and has the skills, resources and infrastructure to keep your video secure.

### STEP 2

#### Decide how to provide the original file

If you can meet and transfer your footage in person, do so. If you need to transfer footage online, research secure options to transfer footage safely. Find more information about securely transferring footage at [bit.ly/vae\\_techtools\\_transferring](http://bit.ly/vae_techtools_transferring)

### STEP 3

#### Provide supplementary information

If possible, provide a printed or electronic summary that includes:

- Time, date and specific location of where the video was captured;
- A concise factual summary of what is shown in the video;
- Names and contact information for the videographer; persons filmed and others who may have valuable information about the incident; and
- Security information.



VIDEO AS EVIDENCE: **MINI GUIDE** [VAE.WITNESS.ORG](http://VAE.WITNESS.ORG)

# BASIC PRACTICES 5: SHARE YOUR VIDEO PUBLICLY

IF YOU DECIDE IT IS SAFE AND STRATEGIC TO SHARE VIDEO CLIPS ONLINE, FOLLOW THESE BASIC PRACTICES.

## STEP 1

**Title** your video properly. Include date, specific location, city, country and key descriptive words.

## STEP 2

**Add an accurate description.** Repeat the information in the title and add a factual summary of what is shown in the video. Facts only. No opinions. If safe, include the name and contact information of the videographer or posting organization.

## STEP 3

Make your video easier to find online by adding **tags**. Repeat the date, time, specific location, city and country then add words that describe the content.

## STEP 4

**Keep the original file.** Video sites like YouTube optimize video files for web streaming. This means the video is often compressed and stripped of key information, so you must keep your original.

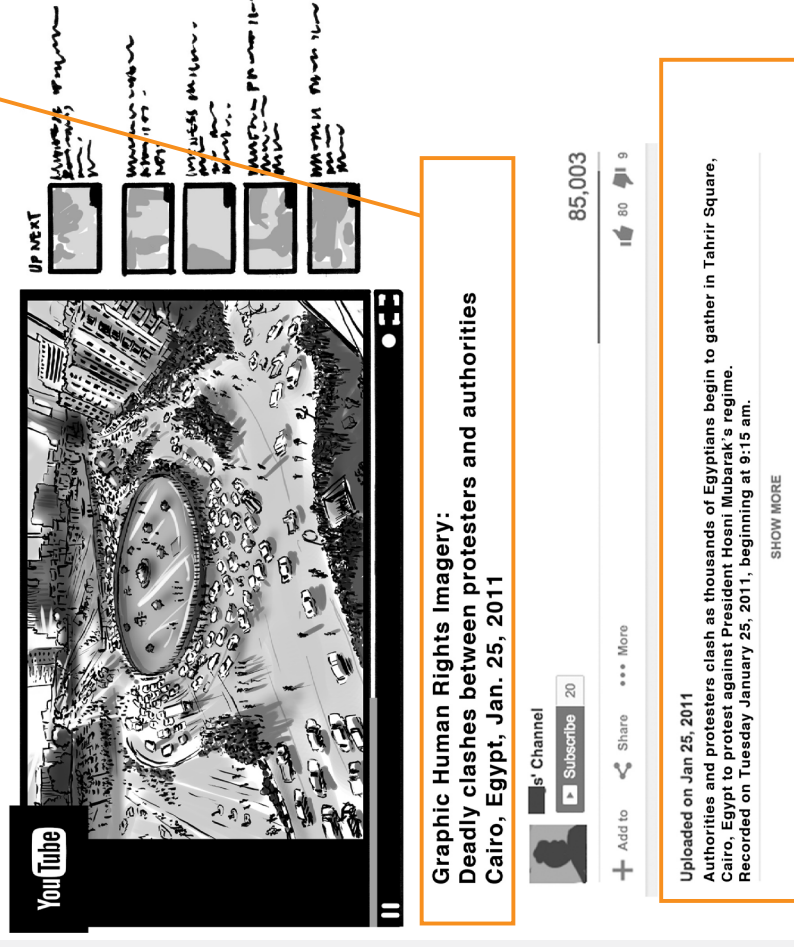
## KEY POINTS

If the footage is graphic add "Graphic Human Rights Footage" to the title and description so viewers are aware of the content and online platforms know not to take it down.

Do not add false dates, locations or tags for any reason.

# HERE'S AN EXAMPLE

Title



## Description & Tags

Find more in-depth information about uploading and sharing online videos at [library.witness.org](http://library.witness.org)

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