



**WITNESS**  
SEE IT FILM IT  
CHANGE IT

# DOCUMENTING VOTER INTIMIDATION in the UNITED STATES

\*\*\*\*\*

Under U.S. federal law, it is prohibited to intimidate, threaten, or harass voters. It is also illegal to spread false information about voter requirements or polling stations. States have different laws about showing identification and allowing guns in polling places. While filming inside polling stations is generally prohibited, you do have the right to record outside.

Learn more about your rights and the laws in your state at [wit.to/Voting-Rights](https://wit.to/Voting-Rights) and about bans on guns in polling places at [wit.to/Bans-At-Polls](https://wit.to/Bans-At-Polls).

## PREPARE

- Always respect voter privacy and assess risks to yourself, other people, and interviewees before you film.
- Have an emergency contact number on hand in case you need it.
- Make sure your phone is charged and is accurately recording date/time for verification purposes.
- Check out the local laws on filming near polling sites.

## FILM VERIFIABLE FOOTAGE

- Your media is easier to verify if you document the date, time, and location of your footage.
- Film street signs or landmarks.
- Start your video with narration by saying your name into the camera, the polling number location, state, and city. You can also keep a written record instead.

## FILMING TIPS

In this case, it is recommended NOT TO GO LIVE on social media.

Once you hit record, keep filming, don't worry about turning it on and off while you capture what's happening.

Avoid zooming in - doing so will blur your focus.

Capture various shots and try to get a 360° of everything that is happening around you.

Keep the camera steady and move it slowly when changing positions.

If you are working with a team, one person can capture different angles and someone else can be on the lookout for developing situations or security threats.





## WHAT TO FILM

- Film the presence of people who are participating in intimidation, showing up with candidates' badge buttons/insignia, and harassing others.
- You can also film instances of people being attacked, including people making claims about another person's voting eligibility using hateful speech.



- Show if the voters are acting peacefully, if the aggressors are wearing uniforms or carrying weapons, and whether or not perpetrators are members of an organized group.
- If police are present and/or interacting with people, get shots of police vehicles, uniforms, badge numbers, indications of police rank, and methods of communication.
- Capture visual records such as long lines, people disrupting the line or blocking the entrance, and misleading flyers, flags, or stickers.
- Check out these fact sheets for laws from all 50 states on private militias and what to document if you see them:

[wit.to/Militia-FactSheets](https://wit.to/Militia-FactSheets)

## INTERVIEWS

- Get permission from people before you film and get their contact details.
- Explain how their information will be used.
- Ask consenting individuals to describe the events taking place or relay their personal experience.
- Your video may be one piece of the story that can help expose a broader pattern that could be used by journalists and/or investigators.





## **PRESERVE YOUR MEDIA**

- Always keep your original media files in a secure location.
- When sharing your video online, include the date, time, and location in the video's title and tags.

- Add details and contextualizing links in the description of the video.
- Do not make edits to the original file - always do so from a copy.

## **AFTER FILMING**



- If filming interviews, ensure those you film are aware of how and where the video will be used. Think of the potential safety risks if the video is to be shared publicly, online, or with the authorities.
- Speak to a local journalist, lawyer, or election monitor before posting. This can help you assess what the best use of it could be.
- If you decide to share your footage with anyone, check back with those you interviewed to see if they consent to it being used.

## **REPORT INTIMIDATION TO:**

- Local and state officials, including poll workers, your county clerk, elections commissioner, elections supervisor, or state board of elections.
- The Election Protection Hotline:
  - English: 1-866-OUR-VOTE / 1-866-687-8683
  - Spanish: 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA/ 1-888-839-8682
  - Arabic: 1-844-YALLA-US / 1-844-925-5287
  - For Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, or Vietnamese: 1-888-API-VOTE / 1-888-274-8683