

Forsyth County Government Policies and Procedures		Department: Administration Adopted: Nov 6, 2012
Policy No: 001-2012	Policy Title: Audio/Video Recording and Photography Policy	Effective Date: Nov 6, 2012 Page 1 of 2

PURPOSE

Establish guidelines associated with the audio and/or video recording and photography of public meetings and in other public accessible areas at Forsyth County government facilities.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the use of any audio and/or video recording or photographic device including but not limited to cell phones, smart phones, cameras, video cameras, or other recording devices. This includes such use by traditional and non-traditional members of the media as well as members of the general public.

OBJECTIVES

Guarantee the public’s right to the audio and/or video recordation and photography of public meetings as required under the Georgia Open Meetings Law while simultaneously ensuring that (1) public meeting rooms are free of life/public safety hazards, (2) that unimpeded ingress and egress is provided, and (3) that the general public has an unobstructed view of the assembled agency or committee and the ability to observe and participate without undue disruption. A further objective is to ensure that the use of audio and/or video recording or photographic devices does not otherwise present an ingress/egress impediment at other publicly accessible locations within Forsyth County government facilities.

GUIDELINES

Handheld audio and/or video recording or photographic devices may be used from any location within the public seating area as long as the user is seated. This requirement does not preclude the use of handheld audio and/or video recording or photographic devices being used in areas designated for non-handheld devices. The user shall not move about the room or otherwise be disruptive. The user shall not block rows, aisles, exits or any other area, or impede other attendees’ unobstructed use of the area.

An exception to the requirement above for handheld device users is permitted during ceremonial events considered photo opportunities by the county. During such times, the momentary unseated use of a handheld recording or photographic device is permitted to capture a ceremonial event or recognition (example: recognition of an individual Boy Scout or scout troop), as long as such does not pose a safety hazard.

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Non-handheld audio and/or video recording or photographic devices including those utilizing a tripod, monopod or other media support equipment may only be used in the areas designated for such.

Those attending public meetings are prohibited from moving or adjusting equipment, fixtures and lighting/room controls.

With respect to the use of non-handheld audio and/or video recording or photographic devices including those utilizing a tripod, monopod, or other media support equipment at publicly accessible locations in Forsyth County government facilities - other than where a public meeting is being held - such devices shall not be used in a manner that blocks or hinders in any manner the free flow of pedestrian traffic or that will hinder, block, impede or disrupt either visual or ambulatory access to ingress or egress points from such facilities.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The county manager or designee will designate an area in the Commissioners Meeting Room and the Large Conference Room for use of tripods, monopods, media support equipment, or any non-handheld audio and/or video recording or photographic device. Tripods, monopods, media support equipment, and other non-handheld audio and/or video recording and photographic devices may only be used in the areas designated for such use.

When a designated area is not established in a room used for a public meeting the county department director or official overseeing the meeting or designee shall have the authority to establish such an area. Such designation may occur prior to or at the time of the meeting. The individual overseeing the meeting shall verbally advise as to the location of the designated area. The designated area must be a location that is consistent with the intent of the "Objectives" stated above.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The county manager or designee will oversee implementation and enforcement of these guidelines to ensure compliance, fairness and consistency. Limited exceptions to the guidelines, based upon unique factual situations, may be made at the discretion of the county manager or designee. From time to time or as needed, the county manager or designee will review the guidelines, evaluate effectiveness and applicability, and make or recommend appropriate revisions.