

St. Johns County Tax Collector

Video, Photography, and Audio Recording Policy

Effective Date: 03/10/2026

Purpose

Every person holds a First Amendment right to engage in speech activity including the right to photograph, videotape, film, make audio records, and interview. Such a right is subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions.

The purpose of this policy is to establish reasonable guidelines regarding video recording, photography, audio recording, filming, and interviews within and around facilities operated by the **St. Johns County Tax Collector's Office (SJCTC)**.

This policy is intended to:

- Protect the confidentiality of personal and sensitive information handled during official transactions.
- Ensure compliance with federal and state laws governing privacy and public records.
- Prevent disruptions to the orderly conduct of official business.
- Promote a safe and efficient environment for customers, visitors, and employees.
- Provide reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions for recording activities.

SJCTC facilities exist primarily to conduct government business transactions and are not intended to serve as open public forums for unrestricted expressive activity.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All customers and visitors
- Members of the media
- Vendors and contractors
- Any individual present within or around SJCTC facilities

This policy governs recording activities including:

- Video recording
- Photography
- Audio recording

- Filming
- Interviews

This policy does not apply to:

- Authorized law enforcement activity
- SJCTC security cameras
- SJCTC-authorized communications or training recordings.

Operational Purpose of the Tax Collector's Office

The St. Johns County Tax Collector's Office serves the public by performing constitutionally mandated and statutorily authorized duties including, but not limited to:

- Collection of taxes and fees
- Administration of motor vehicle services
- Driver license and identification services
- Acting as an agent for various State of Florida agencies, including:
 - Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles
 - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
 - Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
 - Florida Department of Health

These services frequently involve the handling of sensitive personal information and confidential records.

As such, office facilities are intended solely for legitimate public business and transactional purposes.

Nature of Tax Collector Facilities

SJCTC office facilities are **limited public government workplaces**, not traditional public forums.

Consistent with established First Amendment jurisprudence, the Tax Collector may impose **reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions** to ensure the efficient delivery of public services.

Unrestricted video recording, photography, or audio recording may:

- Interfere with access to or egress from facilities

- Capture customers without their consent where privacy expectations exist
- Expose sensitive personal information
- Distract employees performing official duties
- Create safety concerns within offices or parking areas

Therefore, restrictions are necessary to preserve the integrity of public services.

Interior Recording Policy

Recording Prohibited Without Authorization

Video recording, photography, filming, interviewing, or audio recording is prohibited inside any SJCTC office facility without prior approval from the Tax Collector or her authorized designee.

This prohibition includes the use of:

- Cameras
- Cell phones
- Tablets
- Digital voice recorders
- Camcorders
- GoPro or body-worn cameras
- Laptops or other recording-enabled devices

Individuals who engage in unauthorized recording may be asked to immediately cease the activity.

Failure to comply may result in removal or lawful trespass from the premises.

This restriction does not prohibit normal use of personal electronic devices that are not being used to record.

Recording Devices

Devices primarily designed for audio, video, or photographic recording are prohibited inside SJCTC facilities unless prior authorization has been granted.

Such devices include, but are not limited to:

- GoPro cameras

- Camcorders
- Digital cameras
- Hand-held audio recorders
- Body-worn cameras

Any such device brought into an SJCTC facility may be presumed to be recording.

Exceptions include:

- Law enforcement body cameras
- SJCTC security systems
- Authorized SJCTC recording activities.

Media Requests and Authorized Recording

SJCTC will make reasonable efforts to accommodate journalists or organizations seeking to conduct interviews or recording activities.

All requests must be submitted in advance to the Tax Collector or her designee.

Requests should include:

- The purpose of the recording
- Names of participants
- Proposed recording locations
- Equipment to be used

Approval may be granted when the activity:

- Does not disrupt office operations
- Does not interfere with customer service
- Does not compromise confidential information
- Maintains safety within the facility

SJCTC may deny requests that interfere with operational needs.

If approved, individuals may be required to:

- Provide written authorization documentation
- Maintain designated filming locations
- Provide proof of insurance

- Indemnify the county and Tax Collector's Office where applicable.

SJCTC employees are not authorized to provide interviews or official statements without prior approval from the Tax Collector.

Exterior Recording

Video recording and photography outside SJCTC office facilities are generally permitted, consistent with First Amendment protections.

However, individuals must comply with reasonable safety restrictions, including:

- Not blocking entrances or exits
- Not obstructing sidewalks or parking areas
- Not interfering with customer access
- Not disrupting official operations.

Road Test Safety

To protect public safety, individuals recording or observing road tests must maintain a minimum distance of 200 feet from vehicles engaged in road testing activities.

Recording activities must not:

- Follow testing vehicles
- Distract drivers or examiners
- Interfere with parking lot traffic or pedestrian movement.

Failure to comply may result in removal or lawful trespass from the premises.

Confidential Information Protection

Many documents handled by SJCTC contain confidential information protected under Florida law.

Examples include:

- Driver licenses
- Identification cards
- Passports
- Social Security numbers

- Personal identifying information
- Customer records

Recording or photographing:

- Personal documents
- Computer screens
- Customer transactions
- Conversations containing confidential information

is strictly prohibited.

These records are exempt from public disclosure under Florida law.

Enforcement

Individuals violating this policy may be asked to:

1. Cease the prohibited activity.
2. Leave the facility if the activity continues.
3. Comply with lawful trespass procedures if necessary.

SJCTC staff may contact law enforcement when necessary to maintain order or protect public safety.

Policy Review

This policy may be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure compliance with evolving legal standards and operational needs.

For questions relating to this policy, please email pr@sjctax.us.