



ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND

**Corporate Communications Sub-Group****Chair:** David McCall, Assistant Chief Constable,  
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Dear Colleague

**Guidance Regarding Photographers**

I write in my capacity as chair of the Corporate Communications Sub-Group in relation to the above.

Guidance was circulated recently by ACPO colleagues on this matter following a number of recent instances highlighted in the press where officers had detained photographers and deleted images from their cameras. The guidance has reached colleagues in Scotland and partners in the media (Scottish Newspaper Society) who have sought clarification of the position here.

While the instances of this in Scotland may be small, I seek your support in reminding your officers and staff that they should not prevent anyone from taking photographs in public. This applies equally to members of the media and public seeking to record images, who do not need a permit to photograph or film in public places. There are no powers prohibiting the taking of photographs, film or digital images in public places. Therefore members of the public and press should not be prevented from doing so. We rely on the cooperation of the media and amateur photographers whose images can help us identify criminals.

Citizen journalism is a feature of modern life and police officers are now photographed and filmed more than ever. Unnecessarily restricting photography, whether the casual tourist or professional is unacceptable and could undermine public confidence in the police service. Once an image has been recorded, the police have no power to delete or confiscate it; this does not however affect officer's powers to seize items where they suspect there is evidence of criminality.

If you require further guidance please contact my staff officer John McBride ([john.mcbride@btp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:john.mcbride@btp.pnn.police.uk))

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David McCall'.

David McCall  
Assistant Chief Constable