



City of Belton

~ Police Department ~

April 7, 2021

Joey Perez

Belton, Texas 76513

Mr. Joey Perez:

I am writing to express concern about practices you and an associate have recently used to record Belton police officers and recommend a change that would allow you to exercise your lawful right to record police activity AND also assure that officers can perform their duties unimpeded.

On several recent occasions you have interfered with officers as they performed official police business. Your actions have forced officers to divide their attention between you and those with whom they interact.

- The interference includes:
 - Inserting yourself in active police scenes
 - Engaging citizens involved in police activity
 - Walking in close proximity around the patrol car and other involved vehicles
 - Being in the roadway
 - Shining bright lights from your cameras in the eyes of officers

These actions violate the privacy of individuals interacting with police and interrupt, disrupt, and impede officers from performing their duty. It sets a dangerous precedent, if allowed to continue.

To ensure the safety of all involved, protect your right to record, AND allow officers to work unimpeded, I invite you to record from a safer location (i.e. a sidewalk across a street or at a distance). Officers will identify themselves to you upon request, but only after they have completed the action they are involved in.

If you choose to disregard this recommendation you will be subject to arrest on a misdemeanor charge of Interference with Public Duties (Texas Penal Code 38.15). The Belton Police Department is committed to a community-centered approach to police work. We accept the public standard of transparency and accountability. As we respect your right to record police activity, we ask for a similar courtesy from you to respect our right to perform our job duties unimpeded.

Respectfully,

Gene Ellis
Chief of Police

cc: Bell County Attorney

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The Belton Police Department is dedicated to providing excellent service through partnerships that build trust, reduce crime, create a safe environment, and enhance the quality of life in our community.