

Photovoice/ Photo-elicitation Studies

Some investigators use a qualitative data collection method in which study participants take photographs of some aspect of their lives, environment or community. The photographs are then used as a basis for group discussions and to elicit important information about the participants' attitudes, beliefs, etc. The degree of risks to participants depend, in part, on the activity and/or who is being photographed. For example, this process may pose the risk of self-incrimination if participants photograph themselves taking part in illicit activities.

From the IRB's perspective, the "study participants" are the individuals taking the photographs and then participating in the group or other data gathering sessions. Parent/guardian permission is required if the participants will be minors.

If the participants take photos of other people in a **private setting**, where there is an expectation of privacy (i.e., bathroom, dorm room), then all of the individuals in the picture must give written permission before the photo may be used in the research study and publicly displayed (professional meeting, community gathering, used in brochures or other publications, etc.). If an individual in the photo is a minor, then written permission from the parent/guardian is required. Investigators must have a method to link pictures with the signed release forms.

Study participants must notify the individuals and their parents, if minors, how the photo(s) will be used and whether they will have the opportunity to view the photo(s) being used for the study.

Additional information:

- [Guidance on the Use of Audio/Video Recording and Photographs](#)
- YouTube video from Security Governance Group: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAszQx62XxE>
- YouTube video from ChrisFlipp: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAszQx62XxE>