



Rural Incident Observation & Evidence Record

For rural homes, farms, estates, businesses and community facilities in England

EVIDENTIAL STATUS — READ BEFORE USE

- This form is designed to help a witness make a clear, contemporaneous record of what they personally saw, heard or did.
- It does not guarantee that material will be admitted in court and it is not, by itself, a formal witness statement under section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967.
- Police, prosecutors or solicitors may later ask the witness to provide a formal statement. Keep this original record and any associated media unchanged.

How to make a reliable contemporaneous record

- **Record promptly:** Write the record as soon as it is safe to do so. Record both the incident time and the time you made the note.
- **Record facts, not assumptions:** Describe what you personally observed. If you are unsure, say so. Do not guess identity, motive, speed, distance or intent.
- **Use exact words where they matter:** If you record something said by a person, use quotation marks only where you are confident of the actual words. Otherwise state that it is a summary.
- **Preserve the original:** Do not erase, overwrite, crop, enhance, rename or edit original photographs, video or audio. Work from copies where necessary.
- **Correct transparently:** For handwritten records, draw one line through an error so the original remains readable, add the correction, then initial and date/time it. Do not use correction fluid.
- **Protect personal data:** Share the record only with people who have a legitimate need, such as police, insurers or legal advisers. Store it securely.
- **Stay safe:** Do not confront, follow, detain or place yourself at risk merely to obtain more information. Call 999 if a crime is in progress or anyone is in immediate danger.

Legal framework note: Ministry of Justice written witness statement form (CrimPR Part 16); Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Criminal Procedure Rules 2025; College of Policing CCTV continuity guidance. This document is general guidance, not legal advice.

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1. Incident and recorder details

Record reference	SCL-IR-_____
Recorder / witness name	Full name: _____
Contact details	Telephone / email: _____
Role / connection	Resident / farmer / employee / visitor / other: _____
Incident date	DD / MM / YYYY
Incident time	24-hour time: _____ Source: watch / phone / CCTV / estimated
Time record started	24-hour time: _____ Date: DD / MM / YYYY
Exact location	Address / field / yard / building / road / entrance: _____
what3words (if useful)	/// _____ . _____ . _____
Weather / light	Daylight / dusk / darkness / rain / fog / other: _____
Visibility / obstructions	Distance, lighting, hedge, vehicle, window etc: _____

2. What I personally observed

Write in chronological order. Separate what you saw/heard from what somebody else later told you. Use additional numbered continuation sheets if needed.

Time	Observation / action	Source / certainty
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated

3. Exact words, if relevant

Use quotation marks only for words you believe you can accurately recall. Identify who spoke, if known, and whether you heard the words directly.

Record ref: _____ | Witness initials: _____

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4. Person description

Record only what you actually observed. Avoid assumptions about ethnicity, nationality, occupation or identity.

Person reference	P1 / P2 / other: _____
Sex / apparent age	Only if observed; include uncertainty: _____
Height / build	Approximate and basis for estimate: _____
Hair / facial hair	_____
Clothing / footwear	Colour, logos, distinctive features: _____
Face / distinguishing features	Glasses, tattoos, scars, mask, jewellery etc: _____
Speech / accent	Describe only what was heard; do not infer nationality: _____
Direction / behaviour	Where they came from/went; actions personally observed: _____

5. Vehicle description

Vehicle reference	V1 / V2 / other: _____
Registration	Exact characters if seen; record uncertainty: _____
Make / model / type	Car / van / pickup / quad / motorcycle / tractor etc: _____
Colour	_____
Distinctive features	Damage, decals, roof rack, trailer, load, lights etc: _____
Occupants	Number / positions / observations: _____
Direction of travel	From / toward / road / gate: _____
Speed / manoeuvre	State only if observed; mark estimates as estimates: _____

6. Other witnesses / immediate actions

Other witnesses	Names/contact details if voluntarily provided: _____
999 / 101 / police contact	Time called: _____ Incident / log / crime ref: _____
Other action	Gate secured / CCTV preserved / insurer notified / no action / other: _____
Reason for any delay	If this record was not made promptly, explain why: _____

Record ref: _____ | Witness initials: _____

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7. Photographs, CCTV, video, audio and other material

Keep original files unchanged. Do not edit, crop, enhance, add filters, alter timestamps or overwrite originals. Record any time difference between a CCTV system clock and an accurate time source.

Ref	Description / source	Original filename / item ID	Created / recovered	Stored / copied to	Hash / notes

8. Continuity / transfer record

Use this whenever original media or a copy is handed to another person or organisation. One uninterrupted audit trail is preferable to relying on memory later.

Date/time	Item ref	From	To	Purpose / action	Signature / receipt ref

9. Recorder declaration

I confirm that this record was made by me and is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. Where I have estimated or relied on information from another source, I have identified that fact. I understand that this record and associated material may be disclosed to the police, prosecutors, insurers, solicitors or a court.

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____
Time completed: _____

10. Corrections / additions made after completion

Do not alter the original account invisibly. Record later corrections or additions here, identifying what changed and why.

Date/time	Correction / addition	Reason	Initial/sign

Record ref: _____ | Witness initials: _____

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Continuation sheet

Record reference	SCL-IR-_____
Witness name	_____
Continuation sheet	Number: _____ Continuing section: _____
Date / time started	DD / MM / YYYY _____:_____

Continue in chronological order. Number entries where useful. Do not use this sheet to replace or rewrite an earlier entry; use the corrections/additions section for changes to a completed record.

Time	Continuation entry	Source / certainty
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated
____:____		Seen / heard / did / estimated

Continuation sheet confirmation

I confirm that the entries on this continuation sheet are accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____