

How to Ask Permission to Record a Meeting: Consent Scripts That Actually Work

Practical scripts for asking recording consent in meetings, coaching calls, and interviews. Learn the legal requirements across 6 countries and get word-for-word templates that feel natural and protect you legally.

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Five colleagues gathered around a laptop in a sunlit office with digital chat overlays on screen

You've found an AI meeting assistant that could transform how you work. There's just one problem: you're not sure how to tell people you're using it.

The awkwardness is real. Nobody wants to derail a meeting with a clunky consent request or make clients feel surveilled. But the alternative—recording without permission— isn't just uncomfortable. In many jurisdictions, it's illegal.

This guide gives you practical, tested consent scripts for AI note-takers and recording tools in different professional contexts. No legal jargon. No corporate-speak. Just words that work.

Important: This article provides general guidance, not legal advice. Recording laws vary significantly by country, state, and context. When your calls cross borders, follow the stricter jurisdiction's rules. If you're uncertain about your specific situation, consult a qualified legal professional.

Recording Consent Laws by Country

Many jurisdictions regulate the recording of private conversations, and the rules vary widely. The following is a high-level summary—local nuances such as phone vs. in-person rules, expectation of privacy, and sector-specific regulations may affect your specific situation.

Quick Reference: Recording Consent Requirements

```
.consent-table { width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin: 1.5rem 0; } .consent-table th, .consent-table td { padding: 12px 16px; text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid #e5e7eb; } .consent-table th { background-color: #f9fafb; font-weight: 600; color: #374151; } .consent-table tr:hover { background-color: #f9fafb; }
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Country | Default Safe Approach | Key Notes

United States | Ask everyone (varies by state) | 11 states require all-party consent; rules can differ for phone vs. in-person
United Kingdom | Inform + document lawful basis | UK GDPR requires transparency about purpose, retention, and access rights

Canada | Inform + offer alternative | PIPEDA expects knowledge and consent; implied consent possible if they continue after notice

Australia | Ask all parties | State/territory-based rules vary significantly

Germany | Always get explicit consent | Criminal penalties up to 3 years for recording without consent

France | Always get explicit consent | Criminal penalties up to 1 year and €45,000 fine

United States: One-Party vs. All-Party Consent States

There's no single nationwide rule in the US. Federal law generally permits recording with one-party consent (meaning you can record a conversation you're part of), but this is a minimum baseline—states can and do impose stricter requirements.

The following states require all-party consent: California, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan (limited circumstances), Montana, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Washington. (You may also see "two-party consent" used interchangeably, but "all-party" is more accurate when more than two people are on a call.)

Important: Some states have split rules—for example, requiring all-party consent for in-person conversations but only one-party consent for phone calls, or vice versa. This means "phone vs. in-person" isn't just a nuance; it can completely flip the answer for your situation.

Note that even in one-party consent states, recording can still be unlawful if done for a criminal or tortious purpose. If you're unsure about your state's requirements, err on the side of asking everyone.

United Kingdom: UK GDPR and Data Protection Requirements

In the UK, call recordings that identify someone are treated as personal data in business contexts. Organizations must inform people that recording is happening and handle recordings under the UK's data protection regime (Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR).

Compliance isn't just about saying "we record"—UK GDPR requires a lawful basis and transparency about what you're doing, why, how long you'll keep recordings, and how people can access them. Use a short verbal notice plus written follow-up (calendar invite or meeting description) and give a genuine opt-out path.

Canada: PIPEDA Consent Requirements for Recording

Canada's federal private-sector privacy law (PIPEDA) generally expects knowledge and consent for collecting personal information, which includes recording calls or meetings that identify someone.

Canada's privacy regulator emphasizes telling people you're recording, stating the purpose, and getting meaningful consent. Implied consent is possible if they continue after receiving clear notice, but offering an unrecorded alternative if they object is best practice.

Australia: State-by-State Recording Laws

Australia has no uniform national consent rule for recording private conversations. Surveillance and listening-device rules are state/territory-based and can differ significantly between New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and other regions.

Because of that variation, treat Australia as "ask all parties first" by default—especially for group calls—and avoid sharing recordings or transcripts unless consent and purpose are clear.

Germany: §201 StGB and Confidentiality of the Spoken Word

In Germany, secretly recording someone's non-public spoken words violates §201 of the Criminal Code (StGB). This isn't a minor infraction—penalties can include fines or up to three years' imprisonment.

The law specifically addresses recording spoken words onto an audio medium ("Tonträger"), which is why consent matters even when your goal is "just" a transcript.

France: Code Pénal Article 226-1 Recording Restrictions

Recording private or confidential words without the speaker's consent can constitute a criminal privacy violation under Code pénal article 226-1, punishable by up to one year imprisonment and a €45,000 fine.

Get explicit consent before starting any recording or transcription, and avoid "silent" AI note-takers that begin capturing audio automatically.

Other Jurisdictions

Rules vary widely across other countries. When in doubt, ask and document consent—it's the approach that works everywhere.

Why Transcription Counts as Recording

Even if your goal is "just a transcript," most AI note-takers capture spoken words to create it. If audio is captured—even temporarily—to generate the transcript, treat it like recording for consent purposes. The practical risk is the same: you're capturing what someone said without their knowledge.

The Professional Case for Asking

Beyond legality, there's a practical consideration: trust. Clients and colleagues who discover they were recorded without consent don't become more trusting. They become former clients and colleagues.

The good news? Most people say yes when asked. AI meeting tools are increasingly common, and many people appreciate the better follow-up and documentation that comes from accurate notes. The ask itself signals professionalism.

The Golden Rule: Ask Before You Click

Whatever script you use, timing matters. Get consent before you start recording—not during, not after, and not buried in an email they may not have read.

Build it into your pre-meeting routine:

1. Greetings and small talk
2. Consent request
3. Wait for explicit confirmation
4. Start recording
5. Begin the actual meeting

This sequence should become automatic. When it does, you'll notice something feels off if you skip it.

Meeting Recording Consent Scripts for Different Situations

For Business Meetings and Calls

Simple and Direct:

"Before we dive in—I use an AI assistant to take notes during calls. It helps me stay focused on our conversation instead of scribbling. Are you okay with that?"

With Brief Explanation:

"Quick question before we start: I'd like to use my AI note-taker for this call. It transcribes our conversation so I can generate a summary afterward. I delete the audio after the notes are generated unless you'd like me to keep it. Does that work for you?"

For Recurring Meetings:

"Just a heads up—I'll be using my AI assistant for notes again today, same as usual. Let me know if that's changed for anyone."

For Coaching and Consulting Sessions

First Session:

"One thing I want to mention about how I work: I use an AI tool to capture our sessions. It means I can be fully present with you instead of taking notes, and you'll get a clear summary afterward. I store recordings securely and delete the audio once your session notes are ready. How do you feel about that?"

Ongoing Client Relationship:

"Before we begin today—I'll have my note-taking assistant running, as we discussed when we started working together. Just wanted to confirm that's still okay with you."

When It's Part of Your Service:

"As part of our work together, I use AI-assisted notes so nothing gets lost between sessions. I've included this in our agreement, but I wanted to check in directly—any concerns about that?"

For Sales Calls and Discovery Sessions

Confident and Value-Focused:

"I'd like to use my AI assistant to capture our conversation today. It helps me focus on understanding your situation instead of taking notes. I delete the audio after generating notes and can share the summary with you afterward if that's useful. Sound good?"

For Demos and Presentations:

"Quick note—I use an AI note-taker during demos so I can capture your questions and feedback accurately. Is everyone okay with that?"

For Interviews (Hiring or Research)

Job Interviews:

"Before we get started, I want to let you know I use an AI assistant to take notes during interviews. It helps ensure I capture everything accurately and can focus on our conversation. Your responses stay confidential within our hiring process. You can ask me to pause it at any time. Are you comfortable with that?"

Research or Journalistic Interviews:

"I'd like to record our conversation using an AI transcription tool. This helps me quote you accurately and not miss any details. You can ask me to pause at any point, and I can share the transcript with you afterward if you'd like to review it. Is that okay?"

For Medical Appointments (As a Patient)

"Doctor, I use an AI app to help me remember medical information—it takes notes during appointments so I can review everything later. Would you mind if I use it during our consultation today?"

Recording rules for medical settings vary by location and by whether the conversation is treated as in-person or electronic. In some jurisdictions, patients may record their own appointments; in others, provider consent is required. Regardless of legal requirements, asking the clinician first is the best way to avoid policy conflicts and protect the trust in your care relationship.

For Group Calls and Webinars

At the Start:

"Welcome everyone. Before we begin, I want to let you know this session will be captured with AI-assisted notes. Is anyone not comfortable with that? If you say no, we won't record—no explanation needed. Otherwise, we'll get started in just a moment."

When Someone Joins Late:

"Hi [Name], just so you know—we're using an AI note-taker for this session. Let me know if that's a problem and I can pause it."

Handling Common Responses

When They Say Yes

Simply say "Great, thank you" and move on. Don't oversell or over-explain. The less you dwell on it, the more normal it becomes.

When They Say No

Graceful Response:

"No problem at all. Let me just grab a pen and paper instead."

Then do exactly that. No guilt trips, no persuasion attempts, no awkward silences. Their comfort matters more than your convenience.

When They Have Questions

"What happens to the recording?"

"I use it to generate notes, then delete the audio. The transcript and summary stay stored securely. I'm happy to delete everything after our call if you prefer."

"Who else will see it?"

"Just me, unless you'd like me to share the summary with you. It won't be shared with anyone else without your permission."

"Can I get a copy?"

"Absolutely. I can send you the transcript or summary afterward."

When They Seem Hesitant

"I completely understand if you'd rather not. We can do this the old-fashioned way—no issue at all."

Give them an easy out. Pressuring someone into consent defeats the purpose.

Proactive Communication: Before the Meeting

You can reduce in-meeting friction by mentioning your AI assistant before people even join the call.

In Calendar Invitations

Add a line to your meeting description:

"Note: I use an AI assistant for meeting notes. Let me know if you have any concerns."

In Email Signatures

"I use AI-assisted note-taking in meetings to ensure accuracy. Feel free to ask me about it."

In Your Booking Page or Intake Forms

"Sessions are supported by AI note-taking technology to help capture key points and action items. You'll have the opportunity to opt out at the start of our conversation."

These pre-notifications don't replace asking for consent in the moment, but they set expectations and give people time to consider their comfort level.

For Coaches and Consultants: Contract Language

If you work with clients over multiple sessions, consider adding AI tool usage to your service agreement:

AI-Assisted Documentation To provide you with accurate session notes and ensure continuity between our meetings, I use AI-powered transcription and summarization tools. These tools process our conversations to generate written summaries and action items. Your session content is treated as confidential and is not shared with third parties except as required by law. You may request that AI assistance not be used in any session by notifying me before we begin. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge and consent to the use of AI-assisted documentation as described above.

This establishes a baseline, but you should still verbally confirm at the start of each session, especially for sensitive conversations.

Special Considerations for Regulated Professions

Healthcare Providers, Attorneys, and Other Professionals with Confidentiality Obligations

If you're subject to professional secrecy rules (such as §203 StGB in Germany), using an external AI or IT provider can trigger additional obligations. This goes beyond standard consent.

Under §203 StGB, professionals may involve service providers ("mitwirkende Personen") when necessary for their work, but specific requirements apply—especially ensuring those providers are properly bound to confidentiality. The focus isn't just on client consent, but on how you structure the relationship with your technology providers.

If you're in a regulated profession:

- Review your professional association's guidance on using AI and cloud services
- Ensure your AI provider's data handling meets your confidentiality obligations
- Document how you've addressed these requirements
- Consider consulting with a legal advisor familiar with your profession's rules

When Recording May Not Be Appropriate

Some situations call for extra caution or avoiding recording entirely:

- Discussions involving trade secrets or highly sensitive business information
- Legal consultations where privilege could be affected
- Conversations where participants have explicitly expressed privacy concerns
- Situations involving vulnerable individuals who may not fully understand consent

Use judgment. The ability to record doesn't mean you always should.

Building the Habit

The most important thing about consent scripts isn't finding perfect words—it's making the ask automatic.

Practice until it's routine:

- Say your chosen script out loud before your next three meetings
- Put a sticky note on your monitor: "Ask first"
- Create a pre-meeting checklist that includes the consent request

Notice when something feels off: Once the habit is established, you'll feel a nagging sensation if you start recording without asking. Trust that instinct.

Keep it brief: The more words you use, the more awkward it becomes. A simple "I use AI notes—okay with you?" is often enough for colleagues who know you well.

The Bottom Line

Asking permission to record isn't a barrier to using AI meeting tools—it's what makes using them sustainable. The small moment of transparency builds trust, keeps you legal, and lets everyone relax into the actual conversation.

Most people will say yes. For the few who don't, you'll have their respect for asking.

And that respect is worth more than any transcript.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it legal to record a meeting?

It depends on where you are and who's on the call. In the United States, federal law allows recording if one party consents, but 11 states require everyone's consent. In Germany and France, recording without consent can result in criminal penalties. The safest approach everywhere: ask first and get a clear "yes."

What are all-party consent states?

All-party consent states require everyone in a conversation to agree before recording. In the US, these states are: California, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan (limited), Montana, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Washington. Some states have different rules for phone calls vs. in-person conversations.

Do I need consent to use AI transcription?

Yes. If the AI tool captures audio—even temporarily—to generate a transcript, treat it like recording and get consent. Most jurisdictions don't distinguish between saving audio and using it to create text; the act of capturing someone's words is what matters.

How do I ask to record on Zoom or Google Meet?

Before starting the recording, simply ask: "I'd like to use an AI note-taker for this call—it helps me stay focused and creates a summary afterward. Is everyone okay with that?" Wait for verbal confirmation before clicking record. For large meetings, ask if anyone objects and give them a moment to respond.

What if someone says no to recording?

Respect their decision without pushback. Say "No problem at all" and proceed with manual notes. Don't make it awkward or try to convince them. Their comfort is more important than your convenience, and the professionalism of your response builds trust for future interactions.

Can I record my own medical appointments?

Rules vary by location. In some jurisdictions, patients can record their own appointments; in others, the provider must consent. Regardless of legal requirements, asking your doctor first avoids policy conflicts and protects the trust in your care relationship. Most providers will say yes when asked respectfully.

Ready to Take Better Meeting Notes?

Hedy is an AI meeting assistant designed with privacy as a core principle. Speech recognition runs locally on your device, and you control what gets stored or shared.

Download Hedy !' (<https://hedy.ai>) | Learn more about Hedy's privacy features !' (/security)

Related Articles:

- [Understanding Hedy's Privacy Settings \(/post/ai-meeting-privacy-settings-explained\)](/post/ai-meeting-privacy-settings-explained)
- [GDPR Compliance When Using AI Meeting Tools \(/post/gdpr-checklist-ai-meeting-tools\)](/post/gdpr-checklist-ai-meeting-tools)
- [How Hedy Protects Your Conversation Data \(/post/hedy-ai-gdpr-compliance\)](/post/hedy-ai-gdpr-compliance)

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