

Your rights to take photographs in public places

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Wired Magazine published a short article regarding privacy concerns and your rights as an amateur photographer, titled [Stalker or Shutterbug](#). Its a helpful article that explains some tricky situations, but generally speaking within the United States you are pretty much free to take a picture of any place that is viewable from a public space, whether the subject be a person, a home, a building, an event, or any other public scene.

Earlier this year I was angrily confronted for having posted [a picture of a beach house](#) in North Carolina. Although the location was anonymous in the sense that there was no address, signs, or other identifier in the image, some clever people must have figured out the exact location based on the context of the other images in the photo gallery.

Moreover, those clever individuals must have gone one step further and researched the home's address and owner contact information since the complaint I received was from the home owner demanding (IN CAPS) that I immediately take down the photo within 48 hours or he'll sick his lawyers on me. You see, random people were apparently calling him to rent the beach house after seeing my anonymous photo. It was then that I decided to investigate what my rights were and all the articles I found tracked back to Bert Krages, an Attorney At Law specializing in photography cases.

Had the home owner written a friendly request to remove the photo and explained the situation kindly, then I would have done so, but because he was so deliberately belligerent and demanding, I decided to stand my ground and call his bluff. Several days passed, and then a couple weeks, and nothing ever came of it and I never heard from him again. This was a very useful lesson.

I believe the home owner may have seen the Google Ads on that photo's page which generated dynamic ads containing links to beach house rental agencies and real estate agencies, and he must have thought that I was somehow advertising his house for rent or sale.

According to [Bert Krages](#), Attorney At Law and author of [Legal Handbook for Photographers](#):

Property owners may legally prohibit photography on their premises but have no right to prohibit others from photographing their property from other locations.

Related links:

- [The Photographer's Right - Your Rights When You Are Stopped or Confronted for Photography](#)
- [Barbra Streisands Lawsuit to Silence Coastal Website to be Dismissed. Free Speech Protections Upheld](#)

- [Electronic Freedom Foundation - Privacy FAQ](#)
- [You've Gotta Fight ... For Your Right ... To Photography!](#)
- [Flickr Pool: You can't take pictures here](#)
- [PhotoPermit.org](#)