

Recording of Union Meetings Prohibited

Question: Can a member audio tape a union meeting? And, can an unauthorized audio tape of a union meeting be divulged to anyone who did not attend that meeting?

Answer: Union meetings are not public meetings. They are private meetings, restricted to members and invited guests. During these meeting the members debate and discuss a variety of internal union matters, including the particulars and merits of member grievances and concerns.

It is a class A misdemeanor for a member to secretly tape union meetings. It is a second class A misdemeanor each time the tape recording is divulged. Specifically, ORS 165.540 states the following:

(d) It is a criminal offense to “obtain or attempt to obtain the whole or any part of a conversation by means of any devise if not all participants in the conversation are specifically informed that their conversation is being obtained.”

(e) It is also a criminal offense to “use or attempt to use, or divulge to others, any conversation ..obtained by any means prohibited by this section.”

In addition to being subject to criminal penalties of up to 1 year in jail and fines, the person who tapes or divulges illegally obtained conversation may be sued civilly for invasion of privacy by each person who was secretly taped.