

GENERAL ORDER

August 2017

Immediately

III-07

Distribution: All Employees

Subject: **VIDEOGRAPHY**

Index as:	Digital Video Electronic Media	Tape, Video Video Recording	Videography
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Accreditation Standards: 83.2.2
 Cross Reference: G.O. III-14, Property and Evidence
 Replaces: G.O. III-17, Videotaping, (August 2, 2007)

This Order identifies situations where/when videography may be used to supplement written or oral reports and the procedures to be followed when using video equipment. This Order consists of the following sections:

- I. Policy
- II. Definitions
- III. Use of Videography Equipment
- IV. Handling Electronic Media

I. POLICY

A. During a police investigation, the use of video equipment may provide a visual, true and accurate record of the incident, which could not be similarly described in writing or adequately explained verbally.

B. The use of video equipment in these situations provides a supplement to the written/oral reports and must be considered as evidence just as any other item found at the scene.

C. The use of any personal photographic, video or audio recording device, of any kind, while on duty is not authorized, unless permission has been expressly granted by the Chief of Police.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Electronic Media – Communications mediums which are based on electronic or electromechanical means of production and most often distinguished from print media. They may consist of, for example, videotape (analog) or digital video disc (DVD) (electronic) formats.

B. Videography – The art or practice of using a video camera. Videographers shoot the images with a video camera (analog or digital).

III. USE OF VIDEOGRAPHY EQUIPMENT

- A. The employees designated to operate the video equipment will:
 - 1. Be responsible for, and capable of, operating the device(s).
 - 2. File a supplementary report detailing their activities.

B. Before any use, the recording device should be checked for proper operation, accuracy of any electronic date, time and other data settings and, if necessary, battery condition.

C. Whenever possible, unless directed otherwise, new media should be used for recording. Only media issued by the Department will be used.

D. Inoperative recording equipment should be brought to the attention of the operator's Supervisor who shall arrange for repairs.

E. Investigations and Training

1. Videography may commonly be used to supplement written/oral reports of incidents that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. When conducting motor vehicle enforcement activity including, but not limited to, driving (or boating) under the influence investigations.
- b. During investigations at a crime scene.
- c. Recording training events.
- d. During interviews or interrogations.
- e. As directed by a Supervisor.

2. Videography is routinely used to record persons, scenes and/or events listed above to memorialize observations by those employees charged with investigating or carrying out these tasks. When utilized, video recordings should be:

- a. Made according to the specific standard operating procedure of the respective unit engaged in the activity.
- b. Except in the case of training materials, be handled, marked and secured as original evidence.
- c. Training materials shall be properly marked and their handling, identification and editing shall be coordinated with the Training Division.

F. Field Operations

1. Videography may also be useful for recording certain field operations such as:

- a. During the execution of search/seizure warrants.
- b. When the recorded data can be used to aid in the Identification of suspects.
- c. During tactical operations and street level enforcement activities where there is the potential for crowd involvement.

2. When used in field operations:

- a. Videography may be used if, and only if, the need arises as determined by the Supervisor in command of the incident.
- b. The camera operator will be assigned to a position in the immediate area of the situation to be recorded. A uniformed Officer will be detailed to assist the camera operator to provide security.
- c. The camera operator will begin recording the scene as soon as possible and will CONTINUE videotaping until either the incident is concluded, to change media (tape or disc, etc.), or to respond to an emergency.
 - 1) An emergency situation is defined as one in which an employee or a civilian's life is in imminent danger.
 - 2) In case of an emergency, the camera operator will respond appropriately and shall, if possible, place the camera in a place and manner which will allow it to continue recording in the direction of the emergency.

G. Tactical Situations

1. Video cameras are not routinely used to record these events but may be utilized only if the need arises.

2. If prior need is determined, the major in charge of the investigative unit or geographic area will give written approval prior to the initiation of videography.

3. When such approval is granted and use of the camera is required on the scene, personnel will adhere to the guidelines outlined in this Order.

III. HANDLING ELECTRONIC MEDIA

A. All video media, except that which is recorded for training purposes, will be considered to have evidentiary value which precludes any editing, erasing, or alterations, prior to final legal disposition of the case.

1. After the incident is over and recording is complete, action must be taken to prevent accidental erasure or overwriting of the recorded data. Such action may include:

- a. Finalizing a digital video disc.
- b. Breaking the security tab on a tape cartridge.
- c. Sliding the locking device on memory cards.

2. The media will be processed and maintained as evidence according to [J:\Research\GeneralOrders\III Operational General Orders\III-14 Property and Evidence.pdf](#).

3. Original media will be maintained as evidence until completion of the appellate process or until the period for filing of an appeal has expired.

B. A copy of the evidentiary video may be made for use in the investigation or to provide an opportunity to critique the operation. Requests for a copy shall be made to the **Supervisor**, Property and Evidence Unit who shall coordinate the necessary technical support to prepare a copy.

Anthony Holloway
Chief of Police