

COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Guideline

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Part: Support Services		Chapter: Facilities and Equipment	
Chief of Police:			

Vehicle Audio and Video Recording System

I Policy

The Department utilizes digital audio and video recording systems in its patrol vehicles to gather evidence of criminal activity, review officer performance, and evaluate training needs.

II Definitions

N/A

III Procedure

1 Testing and Inspection

1.1 At the beginning of each shift, or as soon as practicable, officers shall ensure that the audio/video recording system ("system") is functioning properly by performing the following tasks:

1.1.1 Logon to the system;

1.1.2 Locate and inspect the wireless audio transmitter ("transmitter") and ensure that the transmitter is marked with the number that corresponds with the vehicle. If the correct transmitter cannot be located within the vehicle, attempt to contact the officer last assigned the vehicle.

1.1.3 With the vehicle running, activate the transmitter;

1.1.4 Ensure that the system begins recording when the transmitter is activated;

1.1.5 Record an audio narration in conjunction with the vehicle inspection as outlined in the SOG for vehicle inspection.

1.2 If the system does not appear to be functioning properly, or if officers are unable to locate the correct transmitter, officers shall:

1.2.1 Enter a vehicle defect sheet;

1.2.2 Notify a supervisor; and

1.2.3 Use a patrol vehicle with a functioning system, if one is available.

1.3 At the conclusion of each shift, officers shall:

1.3.1 Record an audio narration in conjunction with the vehicle inspection

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- 1.3.2 Logoff of the system; and
 - 1.3.3 Ensure that the transmitter is replaced in the correct vehicle.
- 2 Mandatory Use of Transmitter
 - 2.1 Employees shall wear a transmitter on their persons when they are in uniform; engaged in patrol or enforcement activity; and assigned to operate a patrol vehicle.
- 3 Activation
 - 3.1 The system will automatically activate when emergency lights are illuminated or when the patrol vehicle's speed reaches 90 miles per hour.
 - 3.2 The system may be manually activated by pressing the record button on the overhead console or by activating the transmitter.
 - 3.3 Where practicable, officers shall activate the system, regardless of whether or not the video footage may be useful, during:
 - 3.3.1 Traffic stops;
 - 3.3.2 Check subjects or other investigative contacts;
 - 3.3.3 Disturbances, specifically including domestic disturbances;
 - 3.3.4 Anticipated arrest situations; and
 - 3.3.5 Any other situation where the officer believes that a citizen complaint may be generated.
 - 3.4 Officers are strongly encouraged to activate the system during any other situation involving citizen contact.
 - 3.5 Officers may manually deactivate the transmitter during any incident when the situation appears stable and it appears unlikely that there will be further contact with suspects, citizens or disagreeable subjects.
- 4 Viewing
 - 4.1 Officers may view audio/video files ("files") from select computers within the Department after the files have been downloaded from the vehicle to the server. The files will automatically download after a few minutes of the vehicle entering the garage.
 - 4.2 To view the files in the viewer software, officers logon using their four-digit PIN as the username and their six-digit long distance telephone code as the password.
 - 4.3 Supervisors are encouraged not to rely on viewing files as a substitute for actual supervision.
- 5 Video Recovery
 - 5.1 In order to preserve a file for evidentiary purposes, officers must:
 - 5.1.1 "Tag" the file, by:
 - 5.1.1.1 Pressing the stop button on the console repeatedly at the end of the recording; or
 - 5.1.1.2 Select "tag file" in the viewer software.
 - 5.1.2 Create a case in the viewer software and link the relevant file(s) to the case; and
 - 5.1.3 Create a property field for the file in an offense or incident report.

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- 5.1.4 The Evidence Unit will arrange the copying and dissemination of files as needed.
- 5.2 To generate a DVD, which is not required or recommended for evidentiary files, officers must tag the file, create a case, and choose the "auto export" option in the viewer software.
- 5.3 Generally if a video could be used for evidentiary purposes that video should be tagged as soon as practical.

IV Attachments

None