

	FREDERICKSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES	
	OPERATIONS	
306.00	APPROVED: David W. Nye, Chief of Police	Initiated: 04/11/2014
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TASER AXON VIDEO/AUDIO RECORDING SYSTEM

306.00 – Policy – The Fredericksburg Police Department has established standards and guidelines related to the capture and use of audio and video recordings via the Taser Axon video recording system. This system will be used to document events and capture data to be preserved in a web-based digital storage facility at Evidence.com. Once recorded, these recordings cannot be altered in any way and are protected with multiple layers of encryption

306.01 – Definitions

Audio Recording -- Electronic recording of conversation or other spoken words.

Axon Tactical Computer (ATC) -- A computer with a touch screen display that manages the video compression and storage which is then uploaded to Evidence.com.

Communications Hub -- Connects the head camera to the Axon Tactical Computer.

Event Mode -- In the Event Mode the ATC saves the buffered video and continues recording audio and video for up to 8 hours.

Evidence.com -- An online, web-based digital media storage facility that stores digitally encrypted data (photographs, audio and video recordings) in a highly secure environment. The recordings are accessible to authorized personnel based upon a security clearance.

Evidence Transfer Manager (ETM) -- A docking station that simultaneously recharges the Axon Tactical Computer and uploads all data captured during the shift to Evidence.com. The ETM ensures that evidence handling is secure and not altered.

Head Camera -- The audio and color video camera mounted on a fitted head bracket. The head camera can also be mounted on glasses, hats or helmets.

Normal (Buffering) Mode -- The Axon continuously loops video recording for 30 seconds. It records only video in buffering mode.

Privacy Mode -- Activating the privacy button places the audio and video in a sleep mode. The audio and video are not recording in this mode.

Taser Axon -- Audio/video system consisting of primarily three components (Head Camera, Communications Hub and Axon Tactical Computer) worn on an officer to record events during his/her shift.

Video Recording -- Electronic recording of visual images with or without audio.

306.02 – General Guidelines – Department personnel utilizing video and audio systems will adhere to the procedures outlined within this policy. The use of video and audio recording will be for the purpose of recording evidentiary data to assist in the enforcement and prosecution of federal, state and local statutes. It will also be used to provide an accurate record of an incident for investigative purposes, risk management, civil liability defense and enhancement of officer safety.

306.03 – Procedures – Only those officers who have completed approved training will be allowed to operate the Axon system. The Taser Axon is the only body worn camera system approved for use by the Fredericksburg Police Department.

Officers will inspect the Axon system for any physical damage and to ensure the device is in working order at the beginning of their shift. Any problems will be reported immediately to their supervisor. Officers may sign out one of the spare Axon systems located in the Watch Commanders office if needed. Watch Commanders will ensure the spare Axon systems are charged and ready for use.

If an officer uses a spare Axon system they need to add their name to the title of the saved recording. (ex: Fraud Walmart Officer John Doe). This will aid the officer in finding recorded videos.

Headbands, glasses, helmet mounts and earpieces will be assigned and maintained by the individual patrol officer. Detective models will not have the previously mentioned accessories.

Officers will immediately report to their direct supervisor any loss of, or damage to, any part of the Axon equipment.

For security reasons the Axon system shall not be worn into the courthouse or a jail facility without the approval of the on duty supervisor of the jail facility or courthouse.

Officers/detectives shall activate the Axon system in any situation where an enforcement action is being taken by the officer/detective, or when the officer/detective is conducting an investigation into a possible crime. This includes traffic stops; suspect stops; vehicle searches; interviews of suspects or witnesses; confrontational citizen contacts; and use of force situations. **Officers/detectives may exercise discretion with camera activation when interviewing victims.** (Note: This applies to all officers present on the scene, not just the primary officer).

Officers shall begin recording as soon as practical during a given situation and continue to record until the completion of the event, the officer has left the scene, or a supervisor has authorized (on camera) that a recording may cease. Officers shall document in all reports if they fail to record an activity that is required by this policy and why.

Once the situation stabilizes, if it is necessary to discuss issues or concerns with another officer or supervisor in private, the Axon may be temporarily muted or placed in Privacy Mode.

The report number will be attached to all video recordings. If no report is completed by the officer (ie: summons) the e-ticket number or summons number will be used as the case number.

The Axon will not be intentionally activated to record conversations of fellow employees without their knowledge during routine, non-enforcement related activities unless such recording is required by a court order or is authorized by the Chief of Police or designee as part of an administrative investigation.

306.04 – Media Storage for the Taser Axon – At the end of their shift, officers shall place the Axon ATC into the Evidence Transfer Machine (docking station) for charging and uploading of media.

The ATC should not be removed from the ETM until the data has been uploaded. If a situation arises that requires the officer to remove the ATC it is okay to do so. Once the ATC is placed back into the ETM the data upload will resume.

The media captured via the Axon will only be uploaded to Evidence.com and used for official purposes only.

Officers may use media captured, directly from the ATC or Evidence.com, to assist with the investigation and complete reports.

Media captured via the Axon will be accessed through www.evidence.com.

All recordings are the property of the Fredericksburg Police Department. No video or audio recordings will be stored, displayed, or shared on any social media page or platform without the authorization of the Chief of Police or his designee.

Officers are responsible to ensure they properly categorize recordings captured by the Taser Axon System. The following categories are to be used:

- **Uncategorized** – If the officer does not choose a category the recording will automatically go to this file. The recordings will automatically delete after 180 days.
- **Evidence** – Used to store recordings that will be used as evidence. The recordings will automatically delete after 180 days. If a court case will extend beyond 180 days the case officer/detective will be required to place the recording onto a DVD and store as evidence. **If an officer makes a custodial arrest the video will be marked as evidence.**

- **Junk** – These are recordings made during training with the system or any other recording that is of no value (ie: officer turned camera on then back off immediately). These recordings will automatically delete after 30 days.
- **Training** – These recordings will be used for training purposes. Recordings categorized as training will remain in evidence.com until manually deleted.
- **Pending Review** – Recordings are stored into this category automatically by the Taser Axon when there may be some type of malfunction. **Officers will not select this category to store any recordings.**

NOTE: If multiple officers recorded an event the officer completing the report will be responsible for categorizing the recordings.

Officers will not make copies of any video or audio recording for personal use and are prohibited from using a recording device, such as a telephone camera or secondary video camera, to record media from Evidence.com or the ATC unit.

A system administrator will be designated by the Chief of Police for the Taser Axon System. The administrator will be responsible for the following actions:

- Ensuring removal of data as required
- Training of personnel on the Taser Axon

306.05 – Review of Axon Media – Digital recordings shall be randomly reviewed by supervisors to monitor officer performance, training, critique, early intervention inquiries, civil claims or administrative inquiry.

An investigator who is designated by the Chief of Police into the investigation of a personnel complaint, claims investigation, administrative inquiry or criminal investigation may review specific incidents contained on digital recordings.

Officers will be permitted to review any video footage of an incident in which they are involved prior to making a statement about the incident. Under certain circumstances, such as the use of deadly force or a serious allegation of misconduct, the department reserves the right to limit or restrict the officers viewing of the video file.

Under no circumstances shall any digital recording be used or shown for the purpose of officer ridicule or embarrassment. Officers can only view videos they have recorded with their Axon system. Officers have the ability to share recorded videos with other officers and supervisors have the ability to reassign videos as needed.

All requests for video involving criminal cases will be forwarded to the Commonwealth's Attorney's office for review. All other requests for audio/video received into the agency will be forwarded to the Detective Division Commander for follow up. The Detective Division Commander will ensure all FOIA requests are handled in accordance with applicable laws.