

Subject: In-Car Cameras/Body Cameras

Policy No: 025

Approved by: Sheriff Jerry L. Hogrefe

Effective Date: July 21, 2015

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use, management, storage, and retrieval of audio-visual recordings by in-car video systems or body cameras and to reduce liability against the TCSO, capture evidence and to be used as a training tool.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the TCSO for each uniformed officer to ensure that his recording equipment is operational at the beginning of, and during the duration of his shift. The video recording equipment shall be used on a daily basis, to document the day-to-day contacts with the public. All uniformed personnel shall follow the following procedure.

PROCEDURE

The TCSO has adopted the use of in-car video cameras and body cameras to accomplish the following:

- To provide an accurate depiction of events for courtroom presentation, administrative review, etc.
- To accurately capture statements and events during the course of an incident or investigation

- To enhance the deputy's ability to document and review statements and actions for report writing purposes and courtroom preparation
- To provide an impartial measurement for self-critique and field evaluation
- To assist in the ongoing training of deputies and recruits

GENERAL PROCEDURES

The recording equipment will be activated either automatically when the vehicle's emergency lights are turned on or manually by the deputy via a wireless transmitter or by the deputy from within the patrol vehicle. Other triggering events may be used depending on the abilities of the camera system to trigger recording. The deputy's safety is the primary consideration for operating the system and placement of the system components within the vehicle or on his person.

Deputies are trained in the use and operate the recording equipment prior to use. Any malfunctions of the equipment are to be reported to the immediate supervisor as soon as possible after discovery. The supervisor then makes the determination whether the patrol unit will remain in service with an inoperable camera system. The vehicle's unit number with the inoperable equipment will be noted and a work order is submitted to the I.T. Office. It will be the responsibility of the I.T. Office to facilitate repairs.

The following incidents are audio and video recorded:

- All traffic stops or times of traffic control
- All investigative citizen contacts, including civil standbys or complaints
- All emergency responses in which the patrol vehicle's emergency lights are activated
- All motor vehicle pursuits
- All crimes in progress or backup situations
- Any arrest, transports of belligerent or violent subjects
- Any other situation or event that the deputy deems appropriate to record or which should reasonably be recorded.


Digital Video Evidence

Deputies shall not attempt to erase, alter, modify, or tamper with any digital recording or digital recording equipment when retrieving video incidents for viewing, deputies are limited to accessing only their own recordings. Accessing or attempting to access other deputy's video is not allowed unless authorized by a supervisor.

The recording devices utilized by the TCSO records and temporarily stores events onto a digital storage computer. Deputies shall not attempt to remove or access this storage medium without authorization from a supervisor or the IT Staff.

Recorded material stored on the server or as evidence may be periodically purged upon reaching its retention date. Long term retention will be done by creating a DVD from the server which is checked through Evidence. Deputies needing copies of their recordings for Court or discovery purposes shall contact the Evidence Technician who will provide the copy as soon as practical.

Copying or release of recorded incidents is not allowed in any manner without the authorization of a Lieutenant or above. The videos are not to be viewed or shared for viewing in any unprofessional manner, nor are they to be used for personal profit or gain.



Supervisors will conduct random inspections of units during the normal tour of duty to ensure officers are in compliance with this policy. Failure to utilize recording devices will result in discipline.