

WINTER SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE OB-015	
TITLE: In-car Video Camera Systems	REF. No:
Effective: 12/10/08	Revised: 11/24/15
CFA STANDARDS CALEA STANDARDS	

PURPOSE: This policy shall provide guidelines on the use of in-car audio/video equipment.

DISCUSSION: The police department has purchased in-car camera systems, which consists of a front camera, wireless personal microphone, and a rear seat camera/microphone unit. The use of in-car systems shall be used as outlined in this policy and in accordance with State and Federal laws. Furthermore, the Winter Springs Police Department is committed to maintaining the highest level of integrity within the community we serve. Video equipment provides the most objective manner in which to document incidents we handle.

POLICY: It shall be the policy of the Winter Springs Police Department to use in-car audio/video systems to record events officers encounter during the course of their duty. In-car video systems shall provide evidence for use in the prosecution of cases and increase officer safety. Strict adherence to this policy is necessary for recording and preserving documentation of citizen encounters and gathering evidence for criminal cases.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

015.1 CAMERA OPERATION

- A.** No officer shall operate a camera system until they have read and become familiar with the written operating instructions available for each unit. Officers assigned to vehicles with camera systems shall receive orientation in the operation of the system.
- B.** Before going on-duty, officers driving a vehicle with a camera system shall make sure the unit is powered up, working properly, and the proper date and time is displayed on the unit. Officers shall note any discrepancy in an email to the Help Desk and the vehicle shall be left at the station at the end of that shift so repairs can be made.
- C.** Officers shall not attempt to make internal repairs to camera systems at any time.
- D.** While operating a camera system on patrol, the system should remain on and the zoom should be set so the front portion of the hood of the patrol car is visible. Once in contact with a vehicle or subjects, zoom may be adjusted for tactical or operational purposes.
- E.** Cameras shall not be used in any manner that brings the officer or the department into discredit.
- F.** Officers shall not attempt to unplug, relocate, remove, or otherwise hinder the normal operation of the camera unit.
- G.** The wireless microphone shall be worn and activated at all times during the recording of an event.

015.2 RECORDING PROCEDURES

- A.** Officers shall use in-car camera systems at all times in the following situations:
1. All vehicle pursuits;
 2. All DUI investigations;
 3. All high risk/felony traffic stops or incidents;
 4. All traffic stops;
 5. At anytime a unit responds to a call in an emergency fashion regardless of the use of emergency equipment;
- B.** Officers may use camera systems at their discretion at anytime they are in the performance of their duties where video or audio documentation would further the police mission.
- C.** Officers are encouraged to use in-car camera systems under the following circumstances:
1. In-progress crimes if the patrol vehicle can be positioned in a manner safe for the officers;
 2. When contacting suspicious people;
 3. Crash scenes with road blockage or other major impacts to traffic flow.
- D.** When an officer places an arrested or detained subject into the rear of a patrol car equipped with a rear camera, the officer shall manually activate the rear camera and microphone system.
1. The officers shall not turn off the camera and microphone until the person has been transported to the jail or receiving facility.
 2. Officers may temporarily suspend audio recording when they are broadcasting or receiving information via police radio or cellular phone that is confidential or in furtherance of an on-going criminal investigation.
 3. The officer shall reactivate the audio recording as soon as those transmissions are complete.
 4. Officers shall turn off or sufficiently mute their AM/FM radios as not to compromise the recording of audio.
- E.** The camera system may be manually deactivated during non-enforcement activities, such as traffic direction, special details, etc. where emergency equipment is operational for extended periods.
- F.** When an officer is using a camera system to record enforcement activity, the system shall not be deactivated until the enforcement action is complete.
- G.** If an encounter is pursuant to a lawful police investigation, individuals do not have to be informed they are being audio recorded, however, during all other encounters, anyone being audio recorded must be informed.
- H.** Search of subjects should be done in view of the camera system when possible. Officers may also narrate search findings onto the audio recording and place articles on the patrol car hood in view of the camera.

015.3 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

- A.** Supervisors shall ensure the officer operating the camera equipment follows procedures for the use and maintenance of said equipment.
- B.** Supervisors shall randomly review video footage to make assessments of officer performance and to determine training needs.
- C.** Supervisors shall report any problems with the camera equipment to their immediate supervisor.

015.4 USE AND STORAGE OF VIDEO

- A.** Video footage of non-evidentiary value shall be stored on the dedicated server for sixty (60) days unless it relates to a DUI investigation, which shall be stored for three hundred sixty five (365) days. After sixty days or three hundred sixty five, respectively, the footage will be removed from the server.
- B.** It is the officer's responsibility to send a request via email to "_policevideoevidence" with the case number, date of incident, time of incident, and vehicle number. Once the email has been received, the video shall be saved and copied onto an evidence disk by authorized personnel for use by the SAO or for other court purposes.
- C.** Disks that are marked as evidence shall be subject to the same security restrictions and chain of evidence safeguards as outlined in G.O. 8-2.
- D.** Any camera footage of all reports cleared by arrests, pursuits, DUI, personal injury cases, or felonious conduct shall be marked as evidence and processed according to policy.
- E.** Officers shall download video footage from their in-car camera system at least once during the end of a tour of duty cycle using the docking station mounted on the wall of the sally port or wireless points installed around city buildings as dictated by the camera system mounted in their vehicles. Care should be taken not to drive off from the docking station prior to unplugging from it. During the course of the duty day, officers shall review their archived video files using the desktop computer in the Squad Room and make sure they are tagged and marked accordingly as per need. Any relevant information shall be added by the officer.
- F.** Officers may request case relevant digital media be held on the server longer than 60 days through their supervisor who shall forward the reason for the request to the Support Services Bureau. The footage may then be preserved in accordance to the request.
- G.** The Evidence Custodian shall maintain evidence disks according to standards and policy. Requests for copies of digital evidence shall be forwarded through the Criminal Investigations Bureau.
- H.** Media exceeding the sixty day threshold and are not needed for quality control or other administrative matter will be erased from the server by authorized personnel.

015.5 PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

- A.** Digital media entered into evidence shall ~~not~~ be subject to a public records request. Each request shall be subject to the public record exemptions. In these cases, Rules of Discovery shall apply and the media will only be made available upon presentation of subpoena or other relevant documentation. Media may be reviewed at the station but shall not be duplicated without specific request from the court.

- B. Media contained on the server not entered as evidence is also subject to public records requests. Upon presentation of a Public Records Request, the Professional Standards Division will facilitate the viewing and/or duplication of such media in accordance with Florida Statute 119.07.

015.6 DUI VIDEO RECORDING

- A. When preparing to stop a motorist for a traffic stop, officers shall make every attempt to narrate probable cause and reasons for the stop into the audio recorder prior to actually stopping the vehicle. Officers may manually activate the camera at anytime prior to activating their emergency equipment in order to record as much of a suspected DUI driving pattern as possible.
- B. When an officer contacts a driver they suspect of DUI, they shall make every effort to record roadside field sobriety exercises.
- C. When video evidence is recorded, the officer shall make every effort to download the information to the server. Officers shall note in their Offense Reports that video of the scene was recorded.
- D. Upon request of the SAO, the Property Custodian shall make a copy of the video from the scene and forward it to them as outlined in policy. Integrity of the chain of custody shall be maintained.
- E. Officers shall review all of their recordings when downloaded to the server to add relevant information in the notes section. This will include event number, marking the recording as evidence, etc. and making sure there are no problems with the recording unit.

015.7 TRAINING

- A. Every officer issued a vehicle with an in-car camera system shall receive a copy of the unit's quick reference guide and orientation on the unit's operation. This orientation will be conducted by in-house personnel and shall be documented. Documentation that the officer received and understood the operation of the camera unit shall be forwarded by the officer's supervisor and to the Operations Bureau Commander for review and retention by the Training Division.

015.8 DISPOSAL OF VIDEO FILES

- A. Video files stored on the dedicated server that are not marked as evidence are set up on an automatic purging cycle to be erased from the server after three hundred sixty five (365) days for DUI's and sixty (60) days for everything else.
- B. Video files shall be retained on the server pursuant to records retention schedules. Required paperwork will be forwarded to Records for proper filing to document the disposal or video files.

BY ORDER OF:
Kevin P. Brunelle
CHIEF OF POLICE