




ARLINGTON COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE MANUAL

Chapter: 5 Procedures	Effective Date: July 20, 2021	Amends/Supersedes: September 4, 2012	By Authority of the Chief of Police
Accreditation Standard(s): ADM.16.01, ADM.16.02			 Charles A. Penn

574.03 Capturing Digital Images

I. Policy – This directive applies to the use of electronic recording devices and establishes procedures for uploading and archiving original image files. It does not apply to the duties performed by the Digital Forensic Unit.

II. Definitions

- A. Axon Capture App – An app that allows users to capture audio, video and photos and automatically uploads the information to the department's Evidence.com account.
- B. Electronic Recording Devices - Any device used by individuals, that has a recording function that can capture digital photos or video images.
- C. Lossless Compression - Any compression technique wherein no loss in image data will occur when the image is compressed. The image can be retrieved in its original form.
- D. Significant Injuries - As it pertains to accident investigations, any type of injury that involves medic transport. Also, any type of injury that involves the head where there is a loss of consciousness observed or reported.

III. Procedure

A. Digital Photo Images

1. File Format

- a. Most Crime Scene Images saved by the camera will be captured in JPEG (Fine or Large) file format.
- b. Comparison photographs (latent prints, shoe/tire prints, etc.) will be taken in camera RAW format or in a similar type of lossless compression.

2. General Camera Procedure

- a. The first photo taken will be a Photo Identifier containing: *Date/Time, Location, Report Number, Photographer's Name and DID*. This is not necessary if using the Axon Capture App.
- b. No image files shall be deleted from the digital storage media.

- c. Manipulation of the captured image file is prohibited. No details should be added or deleted from the original file.
- d. Images from the digital storage media can be printed out to further an ongoing investigation (examples: Medical Examiner cases, identifying unknown subjects and documentation for County accident reports).

B. Guidelines for Corporals/Agents Regarding Crime Scene Photos

1. Corporals (Agents) are generally not required to photograph minor cases involving misdemeanor offenses or non-criminal incidents. Photos should be taken in these instances only at the request of the investigating officer. This does not preclude the Corporals (Agents) from using their own discretion in specific instances.
2. The taking of photographs will be mandatory in the following instances:
 - a. All death scenes .
 - b. All felony crime scenes where significant documentable evidence exists.
 - c. All crime scenes where physical evidence is recovered and where photographic documentation would enhance the investigation and eventual successful prosecution of the case.
 - d. All accidents involving police department vehicles or criminal destruction of police property.
 - e. Accident investigations under the following circumstances:
 - 1) There are significant injuries involving pedestrians.
 - 2) There are significant injuries to one or more of the vehicle occupants.
 - 3) One or more of the drivers involved are being cited for a traffic infraction and the Corporal (Agent) determines that photographs will enhance the investigation and the eventual successful prosecution.
 - 4) Anytime photographs are specifically requested by the investigating officer and the Corporal (Agent) determines that it will significantly enhance the investigation.
 - 5) Administrative reviews or investigations when requested by a supervisor.
3. In the course of photographing evidence in the close-up range, the Corporal (Agent) will always include a labeled scale to facilitate one-to-one reproduction. This is especially important when photographing fingerprints or shoe impressions, as the actual size of the reproduction is necessary for comparison purposes.

C. Procedure for Digital Cameras with Video Capture Capability

1. For cameras that have video capture, the following procedure is to be followed:
 - a. Video files are to be uploaded to Evidence.com via the Axon Capture App.
 - b. Video files captured by the Axon Capture App must be properly labeled prior to automatic upload to Evidence.com.
- D. General Upload Procedures for all Photos
 1. Digital storage media cards are to be uploaded to Evidence.com via the Axon Capture App.
 2. Format (wipe clean) digital storage media cards using either the camera or a computer after they have been uploaded.
- E. Procedures for Crime Scene Photos
 1. A photo log must be filled out for each incident or the photos must be uploaded, and close-up photos captioned in Evidence.com.
 2. Digital storage cards should be uploaded before the end of each shift. Do not hold onto cards, especially when you have images related to an active felony investigation or Medical Examiner's case.
 3. Photographs captured with a department issued mobile device must be properly labeled with the case number, category and title fields and uploaded using the Axon Capture App.
- F. Axon Capture App
 1. The Axon Capture App may be used in lieu of a dedicated digital camera to photograph graffiti, shoplifting, misdemeanor destruction of property, Field Investigation Reports, and misdemeanor or non-evidentiary firearm cases.
 2. The Axon Capture App shall only be used on department issued mobile devices.
 3. Photos are to be uploaded and labeled with the case number, category and the title fields. A photo log is not required.
 4. Corporals (Agents) must use their issued digital camera to document crime scenes with the exception of those incidents listed in section B.1.
 5. Officers can use the Axon Capture App to document evidence and/or crime scene conditions immediately after an incident when the following conditions are present:
 - a. The evidence and/or scene conditions will be significantly altered unless immediately captured.
 - b. A Corporal/Agent is not on scene.

- c. There is no other method available to document the scene using a higher quality camera.

G. Upload Procedures Regarding Field Investigation Report (FI) Photos

1. FI digital images will be captured on a digital storage media card or with the Axon Capture App on a department issued mobile device.
2. A photograph of the ID of the subject of the FI or a picture of a piece of paper with the name and DOB of each subject should be included.

H. Uploading Images from Personal Mobile Electronic Devices

1. As a general rule, only department issued recording devices should be used for documentation purposes during the course of official law enforcement duties. However, it is recognized that there will be instances where the capture of information using other electronic recording devices may be appropriate. In those instances, the following protocol will be adhered to:
 - a. Notification will be made to either the officer's immediate supervisor, the lead Corporal/Agent/MPO or the Incident Commander, that digital images have been captured on a personal mobile electronic device and documented in a case report or supplement.
 - b. When personal mobile electronic devices are utilized, the officer will upload the media to Evidence.com via the Axon Capture App. If unable to upload the media, they will make arrangements to have the media removed from their device by contacting a member of the Crime Scene Unit.
 - c. Once the image files are uploaded to Evidence.com, they shall be immediately deleted from the device.
2. Officers should be cognizant of and adhere to all recording requirements found in Manual section *574.02 Recording Devices*.