



Charleston County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures Manual

Sheriff Carl Ritchie

5-10 Facial Recognition Technology

- ☐ NEW
- ☐ REVISED
- ☒ REVIEWED

ACA Standards Reference:	N/A
CALEA Standards Reference:	N/A
NCCHC Standards Reference:	N/A
SCLEA Standards Reference:	N/A
SC Minimum Standards:	N/A

This policy dated 1/28/2025 replaces prior policies cited above and supersedes all previously issued directives.

I. Purpose:

To provide guidelines for the use of facial recognition technology.

II. Policy:

It is the policy of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office to utilize facial recognition technology to provide facial matching by creating a template of mapped geometric points from an existing image. The technology uses an algorithm that maps the facial image and then compares it to those within the comparison database.

III. Definitions:

A. For purposes of this procedure, the word "deputy" applies to all agency employees with a certification classification of Class I, Class II, Class III, or Reserve Deputy, as defined by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

The following terms are used interchangeably; however, they carry guidance to specific employees based on usage of the term:

1. Deputy, deputies, deputy sheriff, detention deputy, sworn employee, uniformed sworn employee, sworn administrative employee, and
2. civilian, non-sworn employee.

B. *Employee*: When used without further clarification, the term employee is inclusive of all agency members (sworn and non-sworn).

IV. Procedure:

A. General Information:

Facial comparisons are performed for a number of reasons and the level of evaluation should be commensurate to the possible consequences to a subject(s) or the community. Facial recognition technology is a versatile tool that may be deployed, but not limited to the following situations:

1. Discovering a person's identity during investigations.
2. Checking images against a comparison database to aid in identifying wanted individuals.
3. Identifying individuals from video surveillance footage.

4. Mobile facial recognition by using agency video equipment.
 5. Booking process at the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center and the Juvenile Detention Center.
 6. Advance crime prevention efforts.
- B. Deployment:
1. Facial recognition software provides several different platforms that offer integrated functionality. The technology provides rapid identification for general investigations. The technology can be deployed in the field by using agency owned video equipment at events or situations deemed necessary by the agency. Another application the technology permits is the ability to upload images through the software for identification verification.
 2. When the software locates a possible match, the user will be alerted to that fact. If deployed in the field and the user receives a possible match from the software, the following steps will be followed:
 - a. A BOLO will be broadcast to all available personnel and provided with the pertinent information.
 - b. A lawful search of the area will commence.
 - c. If the individual(s) are located, personnel will make a reasonable effort to confirm the identity of the person and the status of any wants or warrants.
 - d. Personnel will follow all agency policies with regards to investigating wanted, endangered or missing persons.
 3. If deployed for investigative purposes but not in the field and the user receives a possible match, the following steps will be followed:
 - a. Utilize other resources to confirm the identity of the person.
 - b. Confirm the individual(s) is still wanted, endangered or missing.
 - c. Locate the individual(s) and conduct and/or conclude the investigation.

C. Legal Considerations:

1. The facial recognition software and the collected data held for future use shall be used in accordance with agency policy and the manufacture's user manual. The data shall only be used for bona fide public safety purposes.
2. Data obtained through the use of the software shall only be released or disseminated in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, agency policy, and processed by the Public Information Officer or their designee.
3. If the software is being utilized in the field and the location involves private property, the property owner and/or event organizer shall be notified that facial recognition technology is being deployed at that location. The property owner and/or event organizer has the authority to not authorize the use of facial recognition technology at the event location.
4. When the software locates a possible match, deputy sheriffs will be deployed to locate and investigate. A match alone does not provide probable cause for arrest; it is merely reasonable grounds to detain. The warrant or want must be confirmed along with the subject's identity before making an arrest.

D. Data Retention:

1. Facial recognition software has the capability to store data that is collected for a positive match. The data collected will be stored for investigative purposes. The agency may share this data with other law enforcement agencies in the furtherance of crime reduction and the public service mission.
2. Data collected and entered into the software for comparison will be retained for at least 30 days. The Information Technology Services (ITS) will be responsible for the disposal of the collected data.

E. Agency Equipment:

1. Personnel will only use agency owned equipment to send or receive facial or biometric data.
2. Damage to facial recognition equipment shall be immediately

reported to a supervisor, who shall document and investigate, if necessary, the damage in accordance with established policies on agency owned equipment.

3. The ITS supervisor for the agency shall be notified of any damaged equipment or facial recognition software issues. The ITS supervisor will coordinate all maintenance and repair of the facial recognition equipment and software.