

MESA POLICE Department Policy Manual	Evidentiary Recordings	DPM 3.4.15 Effective 02/07/2013 Revised 07/24/2024
Approved by: Chief of Police	Chapter: Forensic Protocols	Page: 1 of 4

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides Mesa Police Department (MPD) members with guidelines for the collection and submission of evidentiary recordings. Where this order conflicts with Forensic Services supplemental manuals, the Forensic Services procedures will take precedence for members assigned to Forensic Services.

2. DEFINITIONS

Department Issued Mobile Device: A handheld computer or mobile device that runs on a mobile operating system that allows approved applications to be installed and run. Issued mobile devices are used for law enforcement purposes only.

Evidence Management System (EMS): Software used by the MPD to manage evidentiary digital images.

Evidentiary Recordings: Digital photographs, non-digital photographs including film negatives, video and audio recordings, and memory cards or thumb drives.

Incident Report: A report written by law enforcement members regarding a particular incident.

3. POLICY

- A. Members documenting evidence using a mobile device, digital audio or video recorder, or by receiving external copies of evidence recordings, must submit these evidentiary recordings before end of shift.
- B. Members may only use Department issued mobile devices or approved cameras to photograph property-related crimes/evidence, minor injuries, non-injury collisions, misdemeanors and other non-violent crimes or incidents.
- C. A Crime Scene Specialist (CSS) shall be called to photograph serious person-related crime types, major collisions, officer involved shootings, suicides, use of force reports, low light situations, and other scenes where the expertise and advanced equipment is needed.
- D. All photographs and recordings are considered evidence, property of the MPD, and shall not be deleted. Photographs or other recordings may not be produced for personal use or unauthorized purposes. Members shall not use personal equipment to photograph or record law enforcement business. Any unauthorized photographs or recordings shall be reported to a supervisor.

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4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Photographing Evidence with Approved Mobile Device or Camera

- A. Use Department approved and issued mobile device or camera.
- B. Images may be captured in JPEG, TIFF, or RAW format.
- C. The image sensor should be at least 6.0 megapixels.
- D. Take a photograph of the incident GO number, location, date, name and ID.
- E. Document the scene or evidence by taking several photos establishing location and characteristics of area/item of interest.
- F. Photograph at a mid-range and close-up view to show approximate size of an injury or damage. A scale is recommended.
- G. Upload photographs to EMS before end of shift. Photos taken via the Department's mobile device application are automatically uploaded via Wi-Fi or cellular data.
- H. Do not attach evidentiary photographs to incident reports.
- I. Document the number of photographs and a brief description in the associated incident report or supplement.
- J. Memory cards must be reformatted after uploading images to EMS if a point and shoot or single-lens reflex (SLR) camera was used.

4.2 Special Consideration

- A. Images of sensitive areas on a person shall be photographed by the same gender.
- B. In exigent circumstances, with supervisor approval, when a same gender photographer is not available, a second member shall be present.

4.3 Corrupted Devices or Accidental Deletion

- A. If the device was collected as evidence and the associated data has been deleted, corrupted, or is otherwise unable to be obtained:
 1. Members should first submit the item to their district CIU to attempt to extract the information.
 2. If their district CIU is unavailable or is unable to extract the information, the item may be submitted to the Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) to attempt extraction of the data.
- B. If an accidental deletion occurs on a PD server, contact PDIT for assistance.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Video & Audio Recordings Submission

- A. Video and audio recordings are captured in several ways.

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1. All video, audio, and photos recorded by On-Officer Body Camera (OBC) or by Department issued mobile device will be uploaded into Evidence.com for electronic storage.
2. Certain digital evidence from community members (e.g., video, audio, photos) can also be uploaded into Evidence.com by sending the community member a link.
3. If video, audio, or photos are burned onto a DVD/CD, they will be submitted physically to the Evidence & Supply Section and/or uploaded to Evidence.com.

5.2 Request for Copies of Evidentiary Recordings

- A. Members shall only view and/or request evidentiary recordings on a need-to-know basis consistent with their job duties. "Curiosity" inquiries are forbidden.
- B. For members, evidentiary recordings submitted to Evidence.com will be viewed in Evidence.com.
 1. The investigating member or unit may place a lock on items considered sensitive. To view items locked in Evidence.com, the member must request to have the lock removed by the investigating officer/unit.
- C. To view an evidentiary recording that has been physically submitted to the Evidence & Supply Section, members should report to the Evidence & Supply Section and request to check out the item for "investigation".
- D. For public records requests, the investigating officer or case agent must approve prior to the release of evidentiary recordings. The approving member must indicate if images need to be redacted. See [DPM 3.3.70 Public Records Request Protocols](#) for further guidelines.

6. DEPARTMENT TRAINING

- A. Mobile device/digital camera operators shall complete Department training prior to use.
- B. Specialized digital video recording operators must complete the appropriate training for that approved equipment as determined by the affected Division Commander.
- C. Members who operate all other digital audio or video recording devices that do not require specialized training shall follow their designated procedures.

7. RETENTION

- A. Evidentiary and non-evidentiary recordings, including OBC footage, will be retained and/or disposed of in accordance with Arizona State Archiving Laws.

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Refer to [Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records Schedule Number GS-1031, Record Series 53160 and 53161](#).

- B. Affected unit supervisors will ensure that evidentiary and non-evidentiary recordings are properly disposed of after submission into evidence and any applicable audits are completed.
- C. Unless otherwise authorized by a Division Commander, the only exceptions are non-evidentiary recordings utilized for training purposes and media relations.

REFERENCES

- [Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records Schedule Number GS-1031, Record Series 53160 and 53161](#).
- [DPM 3.3.70 Public Records Request Protocols](#)