



**Chapter:** Uniforms and Equipment  
**Subject:** 04-21 – In-Car Video Recording Systems  
**Effective:** January 14, 2025  
**Supersedes:** Official Order 04-21, dated March 14, 2024  
**Distribution:** Department Members

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**PURPOSE:** This Order establishes department policy for using the WatchGuard in-car Video Recording Systems (VRS), including the recording, transmission, storage, viewing, sharing/dissemination, and retention of digital evidence.

#### **04-21-1 EQUIPMENT**

- A. VRS devices used by the department consist of the following:
  - (1) Camera hardware (3 in-car cameras, two forward and one internal facing)
  - (2) Audio hardware (1 in-car microphone, two wireless body worn devices, and charging base station).
  - (3) LCD display monitor
  - (4) DVR, modem, USB, Smart Switch, iUPS, and cables.
  - (5) Media Storage portal access to the recorded events.
- B. Purchase of Extra Media and Accessory Equipment
  - (1) Worksite commanders may purchase extra storage media devices (such as 8GB or larger USB sticks, external hard drives, or Blu Ray Burner and blank media) using the department's procurement card and approved purchasing procedures.
    - a. Additional storage media devices (DVD-R, DVD-RW, BD-R, and CD-R) may be necessary for duplication for use as evidence in court.
- C. Only VRS systems authorized by the FOB shall be used. Any purchase or use of a different VRS system shall be authorized by the FOB and the Information Technology Division (ITD).

#### **04-21-2 INITIAL INSTALLATION OF VRS**

- A. Only a preauthorized third-party vendor or the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB), Radio Installation Shop(s), shall be allotted a

quantity of VRS systems purchased by the Field Operations Bureau (enlisted patrol units) or the Information Technology Division for patrol car installation.

- B. Only a technician that is certified by the manufacturer shall complete the installation. If a VRS is installed by someone other than an approved technician, its warranty may be voided.
- C. All vehicles used for uniform enforcement operations shall be equipped with a VRS system.

#### **04-21-3 TRAINING**

- A. Worksite commanders shall ensure every assigned enforcement member receives training on the care and operation of the VRS as soon as the member receives the patrol vehicle with the installed system.
- B. Enforcement members are encouraged to work with the VRS and its various features in order to become proficient in their use.
- C. Each worksite commander shall designate a TLO to be responsible for managing VRS hardware and coordinating portal access to the media files generated by VRS systems. The TLO shall receive additional training in trouble shooting hardware, software, portal storage and will provide instruction to enforcement members on VRS policy and training on use of the equipment and procedures.

#### **04-21-4 VRS OPERATION**

- A. All enforcement members shall use the VRS whenever they are assigned to, or operate, a vehicle that is equipped with a VRS.
- B. At the beginning of each shift, enforcement members shall ensure they have all necessary equipment to operate the VRS. Enforcement members will also ensure that all the equipment is working properly and noted on their eDaily report.
- C. Once the VRS is determined to be working properly, each enforcement member shall verify that the correct date, time, name, and patrol vehicle number is displayed on the VRS LCD display. If corrections need to be made, and the member is not able to adjust the information, the enforcement member shall immediately notify a shift supervisor or TLO to program the correct data into the VRS.
- D. Should the VRS fail to work properly or develop problems during the shift, including any battery or syncing problems with a wireless microphone, the enforcement member shall notify the shift supervisor or TLO immediately. If a shift supervisor or TLO is not immediately available, an email may be used for notification purposes. Enforcement members shall document on their eDaily report if the VRS fails to work properly.
- E. The supervisor shall place the patrol vehicle out of service until the VRS is repaired unless no patrol vehicles with a functioning VRS are available. In the event there is no patrol vehicle with a functioning VRS available, the enforcement member shall note on their eDaily report that the VRS is out of service, each day until repaired. See Section 04-21-6 for repair procedures.
- F. Video Recording Procedures
  - (1) The VRS should be programmed to activate in the following circumstances:
    - a. When the patrol vehicle's emergency lights are activated.

- b. Manually by the enforcement member from the LCD panel inside the patrol vehicle.
  - c. Remotely by the enforcement member from outside the patrol vehicle using their wireless body worn microphone or BWC, if available.
  - d. As a result of an impact caused by a traffic crash.
  - e. When a patrol car reaches a speed of 100mph.
- (2) Enforcement members shall make every effort to ensure both the audio and video recording functions of the VRS are activated and remain operational for the duration of the following events:
- a. Traffic Stops
  - b. Emergency driving including pursuits, response to emergency calls, and any instance where a patrol car exceeds speeds of 100 mph. The VRS shall remain actively recording until the event no longer requires VRS activation.
  - c. All contacts which may result in any enforcement action of a state law, local ordinance, administrative rule, or investigation, except as provided in Section 04-21-4 F. (5).
  - d. Transportation of non-department persons other than an approved ride-along.
  - e. This section is not meant to require VRS recordings while away from the patrol car (e.g., investigations inside a residence or business where the enforcement member would not expect to come within range of the VRS), unless the member will remain within range for the body worn microphone or BWC system.
- (3) Enforcement members shall make every effort to ensure the VRS wireless microphone is worn in such a manner as to ensure the optimal, unobstructed audio recording of an event is captured. The microphone shall not be purposely covered or placed in a pocket.
- a. Additionally, enforcement members shall turn off any audio other than their car radios (i.e., Motorola 800/900 mhz public safety radios) when they are involved in any interaction that is required to be recorded.
- (4) Enforcement members shall ensure the VRS cameras are not obstructed, covered, or blocked from recording video.
- (5) Enforcement members are not required, unless directed by a supervisor, to record audio transmissions under the following circumstances:
- a. While engaged in department-related duties that traditionally do not require enforcement action (e.g., public relations or community service events, meetings with community groups or public officials). However, if circumstances arise during such an event that requires enforcement action, the VRS system shall be activated as soon as practical.

- b. While engaged in private conversations with other department members or police officers from another department, where no members of the public are present.
  - c. In the event the enforcement member unexpectedly becomes involved in a rapidly evolving situation where there is an immediate/imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm to the enforcement member or others and activation of the VRS cannot be done immediately. The VRS should be activated as soon as practical.
- (6) All units equipped with a pre-event recording function shall be set to pre-record video for 30 seconds prior to the activation of the VRS.
- (7) Enforcement members shall assign an appropriate Event Category to every video file. More than one category can be used, depending upon the nature of the incident. Event categories include, but are not limited to:
- a. **Incident / Arrest:** Any custodial arrest made during an enforcement member's shift, all complaints in which the VRS was used.
  - b. **OWI / OUID:** Any OWI or OUID arrest or investigation generated during an enforcement member's shift.
  - c. **PI/CI:** Property Inspection or Car Investigated
  - d. **Pursuit:** Any pursuit that the enforcement member is involved in, including an incident entered on their eDaily report as a No Pursuit Initiated (NPI). This includes primary and secondary units and the deployment of vehicle immobilization devices.
  - e. **Search:** any incident that involves the searching of an individual, real property, or vehicle.
  - f. **Traffic Stop:** Any traffic stop initiated by an enforcement member which results in a citation issued or verbal warning.
  - g. **Other:** Any activity not listed above, including instances where the camera turns on as a result of speed exceeding 100 mph.
  - h. **Unknown:** This is the default category and shall be changed to one of the categories listed above before the incident is uploaded into the video retention system.

#### 04-21-5 RECORDED MEDIA STORAGE, RETENTION, AND DUPLICATION PROCEDURES

##### A. Uploading and Storage of Recorded Media

- (1) Each enforcement member shall be assigned an account, username, password, access to the VRS, and media storage portal.
- (2) Each enforcement member shall login properly to the VRS to ensure their recorded events are captured into their account and tagged with the proper officer name.
- (3) Recorded events and copies shall not be posted online or on any social media without authorization by the Communications and Outreach Division.

- (4) Enforcement members shall ensure their recorded events are off-loading properly during and at the end of their shifts. If recorded media is not off-loading properly, the member shall immediately notify their supervisor or TLO.
- (5) Recorded events shall be assigned the appropriate corresponding complaint number either at the time of the event or after the event has been off-loaded and is in the Evidence Library web portal, where the event label can be edited.

B. Retention of Recorded Media

- (1) All VRS recordings are subject to the [MSP Retention and Disposal Schedule](#).
- (2) Recorded media related to a criminal case may be retained for longer periods than outlined in the retention policy, if required by the local prosecutor.
- (3) Recorded media related to a civil lawsuit against the department, or a member shall be retained until approval for the recorded media's destruction is obtained from the Transparency and Accountability Division.

C. Recorded Media Selection, Sharing, and Redaction

- (1) Viewing of recorded events via the media storage portal shall only occur on departmental issued devices, e.g., Mobile Data Computer (MDC), laptop, mobile device.
- (2) Members shall only access the media storage portal using their own user account and password to view, edit, or share recorded events.
- (3) Shared events sent to department members shall not be forwarded to other non-departmental devices.
- (4) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests for Recorded Media
  - a. All FOIA requests for recorded media shall be processed by the RRS.
    - i. RRS personnel will be granted access to the VRS media storage portal. RRS personnel shall login using their own account credentials.

(5) Training Material

Enforcement members involved in critical incidents or those that they feel would otherwise have training value, or supervisors aware of such incidents, shall submit a copy of the recorded media of the incident to the Organizational Development Division as soon as practical.

**04-21-6 MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND EQUIPMENT PROCEDURES**

A. VRS Repair

- (1) All repair work, including warranty claims, shall be arranged through the manufacturer using factory trained technicians. An estimate is required prior to any non-warranty repair. This repair process shall be completed by Michigan Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS) technicians.
- (2) If the total cost of repair exceeds 50% of the cost of a new unit, the unit shall not be repaired and should be disposed of per department policy.

- (3) Billing and payment of repair services shall be done directly by the worksite, using the worksite SIGMA accounting codes provided by the FOB.
- (4) The post TLO shall ensure that every camera returned from a repair service is compliant with the camera settings as required in this Order before that camera system is put back in service.

**B. Transfer of VRS**

- (1) At the end of a patrol vehicle's life cycle, the condition of the VRS will be assessed by DTMB personnel to ascertain if it is still operable and in good working condition. If the equipment is found to be in good working order, it shall be installed in the replacement patrol vehicle.
- (2) The VRS will normally be transferred to only a new or lower-mileage patrol vehicle.
- (3) Only a technician who is approved by the manufacturer or the FOB shall complete the transfer. Enforcement members shall not remove or transfer the VRS, unless authorized by the FOB.

**04-21-7 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY**

**A. Supervisors shall ensure that enforcement members issued a VRS, are maintaining and using the system in accordance with department policy.**

- (1) When a supervisor becomes aware that there was a failure to activate the VRS as outlined in Section 04-21-4, the supervisor is required to review the incident.
  - a. After conducting the review, the supervisor shall provide written documentation of the review to the worksite commander.
  - b. Justifiable exceptions due to extenuating or exigent circumstances will be taken into consideration when reviewing violations of this Order.
- (2) Supervisors shall review all in-car camera video footage associated with pursuits, member involved traffic crashes, and use of force incidents.
- (3) At-post supervisors shall conduct random reviews of at least four recordings monthly to ensure the equipment is operating properly and that members are using the devices appropriately and in accordance with this Order. These reviews should include a mix of traffic stops, public contacts, action triggered recordings, complaints, and arrests.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring members perform their duties in accordance with department directives. This includes providing service and enforcing the law in a professional, nondiscriminatory, just, and equitable manner. Any indications that a member's decisions and actions are influenced by bias, prejudice, or discriminatory intent shall be immediately addressed in accordance with directives on conduct and authority.

- a. Supervisors may randomly review recordings more frequently than stated in this Order.

- b. Supervisory reviews shall be documented on the worksite's UD-021, Monthly Video Review Form. The UD-021 shall list the date the video was reviewed and the video's unique link.
- B. In the event of a critical incident, the supervisor may instruct the involved member or other officers on the scene to not interrupt, disengage, or de-active the recorded event. The supervisor shall access the vehicle's DVR and USB to obtain the redundant recorded device to ensure the interior VRS components maintain their integrity and security.
  - (1) In the event of a critical incident, the supervisor may instruct the involved enforcement member or other officers on the scene to not interrupt, disengage, or de-active the recorded event.
  - (2) After a critical event has been off-loaded to the portal storage, the event shall be accessed and restricted only by a supervisor, using their own account and password.

DIRECTOR

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<b>Annual Review Responsibility:</b>	Field Operations Bureau; Information Technology Division
<b>Accreditation Standards:</b>	CALEA 41.3.8 A-G