



Ocala Police Department

Directive

Heading:	General Operations
Title:	Video System Procedures
Department Directive:	7.16
CFA Standard:	32.02 M
Effective Date:	02/01/06
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Discussion

The purpose of this Directive is to establish and describe policies and procedures for the use of camera systems to include Mobile Video Systems and Body Camera Systems, the control of evidence obtained on videotapes or digital recordings, and the storage of digital recordings used with this recording equipment.

It is the policy of the Ocala Police Department to employ mobile video recording equipment for the purpose of gathering recorded evidence for courtroom presentation in the prosecution of both traffic and criminal cases. The use of this equipment shall also assist the Department in identifying training needs, in the defense of complaints against personnel, and in an ongoing assessment of officer-citizen contacts and officer safety habits.

The Ocala Police Department is committed to the use of mobile recording systems to protect the rights of citizens and police officers while balancing privacy interest. It is the policy of the Ocala Police Department to use mobile video recording devices to enhance the public's perception of our professionalism and transparency. The Department recognizes that video images cannot always show the full story nor do the video images capture the entire scene. The use of equipment to capture video images does not reduce the requirement to provide thorough written documentation of an incident.

Definitions

“Mobile Video System (MVS)” – A vehicle mounted camera and recording system with video and audio capability.

“Body Camera System (BCS)” – A camera affixed or worn upon an officer's uniform with video and audio recording capability.

Policy and Procedure

A. Mobile Video System (MVS)

1. User Guidelines

- a. Officers will only use MVS equipment issued or authorized by the Chief of Police
- b. Officers using MVS equipment will be fully trained on the policy and use of the equipment.
- c. Prior to beginning each shift officers shall inspect the MVS equipment to determine if it is working and aligned properly. Officers shall report any operational problems to their immediate supervisor and complete a Vehicle Trouble Ticket.
- d. The wireless microphone should be activated on all video recordings, including police pursuits.
- e. A member will document in their report that the incident was recorded by the MVS.
- f. If a member is assigned both a MVS and a BCS, both will be activated and used during law enforcement encounters and activities as directed by policy.
- g. Mandatory use of the MVS: Personnel who are assigned to a patrol vehicle with an operational MVS unit will use the MVS to record the following police activities or incidents:
 - 1) All traffic stops and investigative stops including field interviews;
 - 2) Field sobriety tests;
 - 3) All vehicle pursuits;
 - 4) All Code 2 responses;
 - 5) Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording.
- h. Personnel who are not assigned an MVS but are assigned a BCS will use the BCS to record mandatory MVS encounters.
- i. Once the MVS is activated, it will not be deactivated until the occurrence has been concluded or the continued recording will not serve to obtain additional evidence i.e. crime scene security, extended traffic control or the like. Whenever the MVS is manually deactivated during an incident, the officer will record a brief explanation for the deactivation prior to turning the MVS off.
- j. At no time is a member expected to jeopardize their safety in order to activate an MVS. However, the recording should be activated in situations described herein as soon as practicable.
- k. Many portable recorders, including body camera systems and audio/video transmitters emit radio waves that could trigger an explosive device. These devices should not be used where an explosive device may be present.
- l. Officers are authorized to review recorded MVS videos prior to writing reports/statements.

2. Livestreaming

a. Authorized users

- 1) Authorized users provided with the livestreaming feature are limited to members assigned to Intel.
- 2) All authorized users will abide by the activation criteria.
- 3) The agency shall utilize an automated system to maintain documentation of all authorized users who activate the livestream feature to include name, date, and duration of activation.

b. Activation Criteria

- 1) Authorized users may activate the livestream feature when any of the following activation criteria are met:
 - a) Urgent/Emergency Backup notification
 - b) Initiation of a foot pursuit
 - c) Officer stops responding to their radio
 - d) To assist with identifying the specific location of an employee for responding officers
 - e) Upon any indication of distress via radio traffic
 - f) Third-party notification of an employee in distress
 - g) Upon request of the recording employee
 - h) To enhance tactical operations and situational awareness during a significant incident
- 2) Authorized users activating the livestream function will announce they are doing so over the radio.
- 3) Unauthorized activation in violation of the Livestreaming activation policy may be considered serious misconduct.

B. Body Camera System (BCS) User Guidelines

1. Members assigned a BCS, will activate the BCS during every dispatched call for service. The BCS will also be activated during self-initiated activity where a member would likely encounter citizens. This would include, but is not limited to traffic stops, proactive policing efforts, and calls for service. Additionally, members will activate their BCS during tactical activities such as building searches, searches for suspects, and foot pursuits. Members shall activate the BCS when a citizen contact becomes adversarial and it is in the best interest of the agency to have the incident recorded.
2. Victims of crimes and witnesses to crimes will be recorded with their consent, whether implied or verbal.
3. There may be instances in which a member is required to take immediate action to an event that occurs directly in front of them which may not allow time to activate the BCS. In those circumstances, the member shall activate the BCS as soon as practical. At no time is a member expected to jeopardize their safety in order to activate a BCS.

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4. In order to protect the relationship between the community and the agency, members have the discretion whether to record informal, non-law enforcement related interactions with the public.
 5. BCS should remain activated once turned on unless the incident or event is of such duration that the BCS may be deactivated to conserve recording times and the officer does not reasonably believe the deactivation will result in the loss of critical information or evidentiary value. A member will record on camera the reason for deactivating the BCS prior to deactivating the camera. Recording may be stopped during significant periods of inactivity such as report writing or other breaks from direct participation in the incident.
 6. A member who is lawfully present in an area protected by the Fourth Amendment will activate the BCS when there is reasonable suspicion that a crime is being committed, has been committed, or is about to be committed, or that evidence of a crime is present. In the absence of such criteria, the member must turn off the BCS if asked to do so by the person that has authority over the constitutionally protected area. Members should be aware of surroundings when operating a BCS, such as in a hospital or medical facility where privacy of the patient should be considered when operating the BCS.
 7. A member will not intentionally record conversations with other department members without their knowledge during routine, non-enforcement related activities. The BCS will not be used to record personal activity and will not be activated in places where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists. Members will not record encounters with undercover officers or informants.
 8. A member will document in their report that the incident was recorded by the BCS. If the member fails to activate the BCS as directed by policy or the BCS malfunctions, the member will document the circumstances in an applicable report.
 9. Members will use only BCS equipment issued or authorized by the Chief of Police.
 10. Members will receive training on the policy and use of the BCS equipment.
 11. Prior to beginning each shift officers shall inspect the BCS equipment to determine if it is working and aligned properly. Officers shall report any operational problems to their immediate supervisor and complete a Trouble Ticket for MIS.
 12. Members will plug their BCS into the charging dock within their vehicle in order to sync the BCS to the MVS prior to the beginning of each shift.
 13. When the BCS is inoperable or not being worn during law enforcement related encounters, the MVS will be utilized in its place.
 14. Members will wear their assigned BCS whenever they are on duty, including when working special duty assignments.
 15. Officers are authorized to review recorded BCS videos prior to writing reports/statements.
 16. Members of the Unified Drug Enforcement Strike Team (U.D.E.S.T.) will comply with BCS guidelines as set forth in their respective section manual.
 17. No U.D.E.S.T. BCS videos will be duplicated/released without the express consent of the U.D.E.S.T. Director.

C. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Supervisors will regularly ensure cameras are operational and functioning properly. They will ensure members are operating MVS and BCS units in accordance with this directive through inspection and reviews of recorded activity.

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2. Supervisors will ensure videos are downloaded according to agency directives.
 3. Supervisors will review recordings each month in accordance with agency directives focusing on adherence to Departmental Directives, officer safety, and training issues that may arise. Issues will be reported to the Bureau Major.
 4. Supervisors will review officers' videos to ensure they are being properly categorized in the system.

D. Supervisor Responsibilities – Department Vehicle Crashes

1. When an officer is involved in a departmental vehicle crash and the crash is captured on the in-car video system, and/or body camera system, the video will be downloaded at the earliest opportunity. If the officer is incapacitated or otherwise unable to complete the download, it is the supervisor on scene's responsibility to see that it is completed. If the police vehicle is unable to be brought to the police department to complete the download, the equipment services coordinator should be notified immediately so that the equipment can be removed from the damaged vehicle. The supervisor or his/her designee will save the video(s) in Getac under the category "administrative" to hold the video(s) for a period of five (5) years. A property tab for the video(s) categorized as "administrative" must be completed in CIS under the case number provided for the department vehicle crash. Refer to Department Directive 4.04 for further information on supervisor responsibilities related to Department vehicle crashes.

E. Digital Transfer and Retention Procedures

1. Each officer will be responsible for downloading video in a timely fashion and should try to download video each shift worked. Officers are required to download video prior to beginning a series of days off from work. Officers will be required to tag all videos with the highest appropriate category: administrative, routine, juvenile arrest, traffic crash, US Marshal, misdemeanor, felony, or capital. Officers will be responsible for tagging videos with the case number for all videos categorized as anything other than routine. Officers will be responsible for completing the property entry tab on the CIS report system for any video evidence of a suspected crime and video evidence categorized as juvenile arrest, misdemeanor, felony (including non-reporting sexual battery), or capital. The officer will be required to properly categorize all videos in the system assigned to them.
2. Units that use systems other than CIS for primary reports, such as U.D.E.S.T (MCSO forms) and the Traffic Unit (Florida UTC's) may, with permission from the unit supervisor, burn and retain their own videos from the MVS and BCS system in lieu of using the CIS Digital Transfer Procedures. The U.D.E.S.T. supervisor and the Traffic Unit supervisor will have writable access to the system from M.I.S. installed in their computers.
3. Patrol supervisors, through periodic inspection, shall ensure that officers are downloading video from their assigned camera.
4. The digital and audio information downloaded will be stored on a server that is maintained by the Management of Information Services Section. Access to the server shall be limited to essential evidence or supervisory personnel. Requests for video images shall be made to the Technical Services Section at least 5 working days in advance.
5. Digital video files shall only be released pursuant to subpoena, or where applicable public records law in accordance with 119 F. S. requires the release. If an officer is involved in an incident in which the video will be useful other than as evidence in a criminal proceeding (i.e. training or citizen complaint) a memo or e-mail requesting a copy shall be completed and with the approval of the requesting officer's supervisor forwarded to the Technical Services Section.

The file will then be sent via email to the requestor. All requests for video files shall be documented by the Technical Services Section.

6. The retention of video and audio files in Getac for each designated category of video(s) will be the following:
 - a) Routine is 180 days
 - b) Misdemeanor is 6 years
 - c) Felony is 20 years
 - d) Capital Felony is indefinite
 - e) Administrative is 5 years
 - f) Juvenile Arrest is 15 years
 - g) Traffic Crash is 4 years
 - h) US Marshals is 6 years
7. All other video and audio files shall be maintained in accordance with the state's General Records Schedule as defined in Directive 6.04 Records.

F. FIXED CITY CAMERAS

1. The City of Ocala and the Ocala Police Department have partnered to create a fixed camera system at various public locations around the city. The ability to view live and recorded camera footage is permitted with City of Ocala officials and the Ocala Police Department.
2. Ocala Police Department members will be able to access and view and record footage through a web-based portal. Members are permitted to view and record camera footage for law enforcement purposes only. Video footage is retained on the server system for a 30-day period. Members will not be able to adjust where cameras are pointed or change camera system settings.