

CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Title: ***IN-CAR AUDIOVISUAL
RECORDING SYSTEM***

Procedure: 4.610

Date Issued:

Revised: **March 1, 2009**

PURPOSE:

To establish a uniform method of operating in-car audiovisual recording systems and storing the audiovisual disc used with the recording system. The in-car audiovisual recording systems will also serve to document an objective audiovisual account of events as they occur.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Police Department to use the in-car audiovisual recording systems whenever it is practical to record audio and/or video accounts of events as they occur. Such events include, but are not limited to traffic stops, routine patrol activities and field sobriety tests. The in-car audiovisual recording system will be used to help protect officers against false allegations of misconduct and provide accurate and complete records of events as they occur.

PROCEDURES:

The Watch Guard Digital A/V System has been demonstrated to be a valuable tool in the prosecution of traffic violations and criminal offenses, in the evaluation of officer performance, the enhancement of officer safety and the collection of intelligence information. In order to maximize the proper use of the A/V System, officers will abide by the following procedures:

The Watch Guard Digital A/V system has been assigned to specific fleet vehicles and will not be removed or transferred without the approval of a staff officer. The officer assigned a Watch Guard A/V System will:

1. Prior to beginning patrol duties or any type of special assignment, retrieve an evidence disc from the on-duty supervisor.

2. Once the patrol vehicle is turned on, the officer will make sure the Watch Guard Digital A/V system is on and will place the evidence disc in the system.

3. Prior to officer assignments, the operator will determine that the Watch Guard Digital A/V System is functional by testing both audio and visual components. In the event the system is not functional, the officer will document the malfunction on his/her worksheet and immediately advise the on-duty supervisor. The on-duty supervisor will then inform the supervisor in charge of the equipment via memorandum of the malfunction. The supervisor in charge of the equipment will ensure that the equipment is serviced.

4. While performing assignments, the operator will use the following guidelines for activation of the Watch Guard Digital A/V System:

a. The Watch Guard Digital A/V System will automatically turn on when the vehicle's ignition is in the on position. The system will then record to the hard drive. The system will automatically begin recording to the evidence disc when the emergency lights are activated, if the cordless microphone is turned on or the officer physically turns the system on.

b. The Watch Guard Digital A/V System will be used to record, when possible, suspicious subjects/investigations.

c. The Watch Guard Digital A/V System will always be utilized when transporting prisoners/suspects.

d. The Watch Guard Digital A/V System will be utilized for incidents involving large or hostile crowds.

e. The Watch Guard Digital A/V System will be utilized to assist in the collection of intelligence.

f. The Watch Guard Digital A/V System will be used for all enforcement activities, when possible.

5. Once the Watch Guard Digital A/V System is activated, the officer will not stop the recording until a traffic stop or activity is complete.

6. The Watch Guard Digital A/V System is both audio and video and will be utilized in both modes when activated by an officer.

7. The officer will not attempt to alter, tamper with, destroy or erase any disc or anything that may be recorded to the hard drive.

8. The officer will not attempt to alter or tamper with the settings of the Watch Guard A/V System. Each system will be set up for its corresponding vehicle.

9. Any disc that has recorded evidence will be tagged and stored in the evidence locker and will be documented in the incident report.

10. If upon completion of the shift, the disc does not contain any evidentiary value, the officer will place their patrol vehicle number along with their badge number on the front of the disc and turn the disc in to their squad Supervisor. If the disc does contain evidentiary value, then the disc will be logged into evidence and placed in the CPD evidence locker and it will be documented in the officer's incident report. In the event the squad Supervisor is not available for the officer to give the disc to, the officer will place the disc in their squad supervisor's mailbox. When the disc is full, the officer will go to the on-duty supervisor and request a new disc. The disc that is full and has no evidentiary value will be stored with that officer's on-duty supervisor for thirty (30) days. Once the thirty days have

passed, the disc can be erased and used again.

11. If the disc is needed for court, it will be the responsibility of the assigned officer to request the disc utilizing the Evidence Request Form, at the minimum of five (5) days prior to the court date.

12. In the event that the Watch Guard A/V System or any part of the system which includes the wireless microphone becomes inoperable or malfunctions during the officers assigned call, he/she will complete the assignment, immediately notify the on-duty supervisor and note in his/her incident report that the equipment was not utilized and the reason why.

If the officer fails to utilize the Watch Guard A/V System under the prescribed activation guidelines without justification, the officer may be subject to disciplinary action.

The equipment supervisor will inspect the Watch Guard Digital A/V Systems on a monthly basis. The equipment supervisor will coordinate the repair or replacement of any equipment, including the evidence disc. Supervisors will randomly review the discs to ensure proper procedures are being followed when operating the Watch Guard Digital A/V System and to address any possible training issues of his/her personnel. Supervisors will be responsible for all Watch Guard Digital A/V System roll call training to officers in the F.T.O. Program, new to the department or those who have never utilized the system. Training will be completed using the guidelines set forth by the manufacturer.

DISC SECURITY:

Display of evidentiary disc prior to adjudication of a crime will be limited to departmental employees, law enforcement officials and other person(s) designated by the Dorchester County States Attorney's Office. No disc shall be duplicated for an officer's personal use, unless approved by the department's command staff. When a disc has reached a point where it is no longer serviceable, it will be secured with the department evidence technicians to be properly destroyed.

USE OF DISC FOR TRAINING:

1. Recorded disc that contain material that would be useful for training can be used for that purpose with the permission of the Chief of Police.

2. Supervisors may review recorded disc of officers for the purposes of evaluating performance and/or compliance with department policies and procedures.

3. A record of training in the use of the Watch Guard Digital A/V System will be kept by the Training Officer.