



NO. 10.7

CRYSTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

TITLE: USE OF AUDIO/VISUAL RECORDING  
EQUIPMENT IN POLICE VEHICLES

NUMBER: 10.7

DATE: February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016

NO. PAGES: 3

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the installation, operation and use of police vehicle installed audio/digital visual recording equipment and to establish a retention schedule of videotape digital media.

The primary use of audio/digital visual recording equipment in police vehicles is for the collection of evidence to be used in the prosecution of those who violate the law and provide objective evidence of police and subject actions during encounters.

**SCOPE**

All police department employees.

**PROCEDURES**

INSTALLATION

Audio/visual recorders shall be installed within the occupant compartment of the police vehicle so as to present neither a safety hazard nor vision impairment to the driver.

Audio/visual recorders will be securely mounted to the police vehicle and placed so that objects within the vehicle do not restrict the view of the camera.

**GENERAL USE**

The recorder systems will automatically power on and off without officer intervention. Officers will log onto the systems at the beginning of their shift and off at the end of their shift. Officers must wear the remote control/wireless microphone assigned to the recording unit of their vehicle.

The set up of the audio/visual system with the date, time, and vehicle identification will be performed only by those authorized.

The audio/visual equipment may be activated by the following:

- a) the remote control/wireless microphone;
- b) the audio/visual system control console;
- c) The audio/visual system has been installed in such a manner as to automatically begin recording when the police vehicle's emergency lights are activated.

The primary purpose for using audio/visual recorders is to obtain evidence; therefore, officers will activate the system to record the following:

- a) all traffic stops, pursuits, or emergency vehicle operation;
- b) the handling of other incidents which, in the judgment of the officer, may result in criminal charges, complaints against the officer or other personnel, civil liability, may have other value to law enforcement, for training purposes, or any other time deemed necessary by the operator or a supervisor.
- c) Officers have the discretion to manually begin recording as circumstances may warrant.
- d) Officers are required to record all back seat activity while people are detained in squads with back seat cameras installed.
- e) Officers must activate the audio/visual recording system for all public contacts that a reasonable officer would believe may result in a verbal conflict, enforcement action, arrest, or use of force.

Once recording begins, officers shall record the incident until the incident has been concluded.

Recording may be stopped during traffic control situations, such as directing traffic at emergency scenes, when the police vehicle's emergency lighting may be in operation.

The wireless microphone may be turned off when conversations take place in the police vehicle and the squad microphone has been activated or when conferring with other officers to eliminate the possibility of officer's strategy being monitored.

Officers may manually activate the audio/visual recording prior to activating the emergency lighting in order to record the driving performance of a motorist with reasonable suspicion for a traffic stop or probable cause for an arrest (DWI, reckless/careless driving, etc.).

Officers are encouraged to provide narration with the recording prior to each traffic stop. The intent of the narration is to assist the officer in necessary written documentation and to assist in supporting the reason for the stop.

Audio/visual recordings generated are the exclusive property of the Crystal Police Department and shall be governed by the policy and law regulating government data.

Digital recordings may be viewed from the squad car prior to download to the video evidence server, or by PC terminals in the police department after download.

Officers shall inspect the equipment at the beginning of each shift and promptly report any deviation in the operating condition or appearance to a supervisor.

#### AUDIO/VISUAL EVIDENCE CUSTODY, CONTROL AND REUSE

Officers must note in their reports if they believe an incident has been recorded.

Digital recordings will be maintained in accordance with State of MN Statutes. Digital recording will be available at office PCs for a period of at least 90 days, after which recordings are automatically archived and may be obtained by request through the Support Services Manager.

No audio and/or visual recording will be erased or destroyed, except as outlined in this policy.

#### DUPLICATION OF AUDIO/DIGITAL RECORDINGS

The original audio/visual recording shall remain in the custody of the Crystal Police Department.

Requests for duplication of recordings from police department employees must be made to the Support Services Manager in a timely manner.

Audio/visual recording duplicates will be provided to the prosecution or judiciary free of charge.

Requests for duplication of digital recordings from public or private concerns shall be provided in accordance with the Data Practices Policy. The requestor must pay for the duplication of the audio/visual recording prior to the copy being produced.

Anytime an audio/visual recording is duplicated, it must be done in a manner which preserves a secure chain of custody.