

# WATERTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER



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CHIEF OF POLICE

Effective Date: May 1, 2009	Rescinds: Amends:	Number: A-200
Subject: In-Car Digital Video Cameras		Re-evaluationDate: May 2012
Distribution: ALL PERSONNEL	Related CALEA Standards:	

This order consists of the following numbered sections:

1. Purpose
2. Policy
3. Definitions
4. Procedures
5. Recording Control and Management
6. Inspections

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the use of in-car digital video recording systems for the Watertown Police Department.

## 2. POLICY

Uniformed personnel assigned to the patrol division are encouraged to utilize the in-car digital video recording systems as a primary support tool in their mission to successfully arrest and aid in the prosecution of impaired drivers and to support other enforcement and investigative efforts in conjunction with their assigned duties.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- a. **CLASSIFICATION:** Recordings are classified by the officer at the time the recording is stopped. The selected classification indicates how long the system will retain the recording.
- b. **DVR:** Digital Video Recorder
- c. **DVR STORAGE COMPUTER:** A designated department computer used to store all transferred recordings onto from the DVR memory cards.
- d. **PRE-EVENT RECORDING:** The DVR system will retain the video recording made prior to a trigger event, up to 60 seconds, depending on system settings. Audio is not recorded until the trigger event occurs.
- e. **TRIGGER EVENT:** An event that causes the DVR to begin saving video/audio recordings. Events include activation of the following: emergency lights/siren, vehicle speed exceeds preset threshold setting, and manual activation of the DVR system. The recording ends when the officer presses the stop button, and the trigger event is no longer active.
- f. **VIDEO CAMERA:** Digital video camera with on-screen menu controls.
- g. **WIRELESS MICROPHONE:** Each camera kit is equipped with a compatible wireless microphone unit. The wireless microphone's audio channel is initially set by the installer specifically for that vehicle's mobile video system; no two units will be set with the same audio frequency.

## 4. PROCEDURES

- a. Officers will adhere to the procedures listed below when utilizing DVR equipment.
  - i. When beginning tours of duty, officers operating departmental vehicles equipped with a DVR shall ensure that the correct date and time is displayed, and that the DVR is working properly, and immediately report any problems or malfunctions to the fleet manager.
    1. The fleet manager will be notified by either a completed vehicle maintenance form or by email.
    2. Upon receiving a report of the DVR not operating correctly the fleet manager will be responsible for obtaining proper systems maintenance.
  - ii. Officers will ensure that DVR equipment (both video and audio) is activated and operating properly and that the video recorder is positioned and adjusted to record events in the following circumstances:

1. Traffic Stops
  2. Pursuits
  3. Emergency Response
  4. Prisoner Transport
  5. Contact with citizens as needed
- iii. Officers will wear the microphone transmitter during their entire shift.
    1. The microphone transmitter will be powered down and stored in the charger when not in use in order to charge the battery.
  - iv. The interior/in-car microphone is always activated while the DVR is recording and will not be turned off.
  - v. Officers will ensure that the DVR has an adequate amount of free recording space to complete their tour of duty. The in-vehicle monitor displays remaining space when not actively recording due to a trigger event.
    1. When the memory display indicates approximately 25% or less available memory, the officer will notify the fleet manager or their designee who will download the camera information onto a designated department computer.
  - vi. Officers encountering traffic violations, especially those involving suspected D.U.I. offenses, will utilize the DVR systems to:
    1. Obtain evidence of irregular and/or illegal driving behavior if possible.
    2. Obtain evidence of driver impairment and spontaneous behavior during the performance of roadside sobriety tests, to include audio conversation utilizing the system's portable microphone.
    3. DVR Systems may also be used to support other law enforcement duties and investigative encounters in which the use of the DVR might assist with successful investigation or prosecution efforts. This includes the use of the system to document crimes in progress, contact with citizens as needed, and actions / conversations of passengers, and prisoners placed in the patrol vehicle.
  - vii. At no time should officers disregard officer safety or the safety of the public for the purpose of being in a position for recording.
  - viii. DVR equipment is automatically activated when the vehicle's emergency warning devices are in operation or the vehicle exceeds a preset speed. When the event ends, the officer should manually stop the recording.
  - ix. After an incident has ended, and the officer has stopped the recording, the type of incident is manually classified by the officer selecting one of the preset event IDs listed below:
    1. Classification One: 7 day retention
      - a. Other
    2. Classification Two: 30 day retention
      - a. Traffic stop with warning
      - b. Warrant
      - c. Petty Offense
      - d. Accident
      - e. Field Contact
    3. Classification Three : 90 day retention
      - a. Class 2 Misdemeanor
    4. Classification Four: 1 year retention
      - a. Class 1 Misdemeanor
      - b. DUI
    5. Classification Five: 2 year retention
      - a. Felony
      - b. DUI Felony
  - x. If the officer does not properly classify the recording, the officer must notify their supervisor to make the correction once the recording has been uploaded to the DVR storage computer.
  - xi. Deliberate altering, deleting or changing the content of a recording from its original form is a violation of law and subject the officer to criminal and administrative sanctions.
  - xii. Officers will only log onto the camera system under their user name.
  - xiii. Under no circumstances will any cables associated with the camera be unplugged, altered or tampered with in any way.
  - xiv. Officers will not attempt to remove or access the memory card.

- xv. Officers will note in offense, arrest, and related reports when video/audio recordings were made during the incident in question.
- xvi. Field Training Officers will be responsible for training new officers in the operation of DVR equipment and will document that training.

5. RECORDING CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

- a. Recordings may be duplicated for court, investigative, training, or other purposes authorized by the Chief of Police or their designee.
- b. Duplicate recordings will only be made by a Sergeant and above.
- c. If the recording depicts a felony D.U.I. suspect, a copy of the recording will be made as soon as practical, but no longer than seven days after the incident and forwarded to the State's Attorney's Office.
- d. Officers will inform their Sergeant or the Fleet Manager of any Felony D.U.I. or other tape requests that are needed.
- e. The fleet manager will on a weekly basis manually transfer recorded material from the cameras flash memory card to the DVR storage computer.
- f. The DVR system automatically erases recordings from the DVR system when the retention period for that recording segment has elapsed. The retention period is set by the system according to how the recording has been classified in the vehicle by the officer or by an authorized user of the DVR system.

6. INSPECTIONS

- a. It is the responsibility of the unit/squad supervisor to monitor the activities of their personnel and to periodically review a sampling of DVR recordings of traffic stops, citizen contacts, and other incidents and activities.

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