

Bloomfield Township POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER	DATE OF ISSUE: March 2, 2007	EFFECTIVE DATE: March 2, 2007	G.O.#: 02-01A
SUBJECT: In-Car Video Recording System		AMENDS: G.O. #02-01	
REFERENCE:		RESCINDS:	

I. PURPOSE

To provide operational guidelines for the in-car video recording equipment. The procedures in this policy are designed to ensure the efficient operation of a video library system and the related recording equipment, to protect the integrity of evidence created by the system, to outline the responsibilities of affected departmental employees, to describe operational guidelines, and to provide for a chain-of-custody of evidence created by the in-car video recording system.

II. VIDEOTAPE LIBRARY

- A. All videotapes dedicated to the in-car video-recording system shall be stored in the departments "Videotape Library", a single secure room in the police building equipped and dedicated to serve this purpose. The exception to this shall be those tapes that have been "readied" for use or reuse and transferred from the videotape library to the Roll Call Room "videotape" shelves awaiting assignment by the Shift Supervisor and those tapes secured as evidence.
- B. The videotapes dedicated to the in-car video recording system shall be organized by their unique "sequential number order" within "lockable" shelves. These shelves shall be locked at all times except while accessed by authorized personnel.
- C. Access to the lockable Videotape Library shelves shall be limited to the authorized records personnel, and individuals authorized by the Chief of Police.

III. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

A. Authorized records personnel shall be responsible for:

1. Maintaining the good order of the Videotape Library including the secure and orderly storage of all videotapes, and for separating and securing those tapes taken "out-of-service".
2. Preparing videotapes for use or reuse, including the erasure of used tapes, the preparing and affixing of unique sequential number labels for each tape, and for maintaining an adequate inventory of videotapes in the "ready" shelves in the Roll Call Room.
3. Maintaining the "usage ledger" in the Roll Call Room, limited to supplying the ledger with sufficient "blank" sheets for continued use and the filing of completed sheets for later reference
4. Maintaining up-to-date and accurate computerized entries in the "Usage Log" of those tapes that have been taken "out-of-service" for evidentiary purposes and for those tapes being returned to "in-service" status
5. Preparing "copies" of videotape recordings from the in-car video system for all approved "Freedom of Information" requests, as well as demands made under court orders and/or subpoenas, or other requests approved by the Chief of Police.
6. Returning used videotapes from the "return cabinet" in the Roll Call Room back to the Videotape Library (for shelving).

B. Shift Supervisors shall be responsible for:

1. Assigning videotapes to themselves and subordinates, for that day's use
2. The Midnight Shift Supervisor shall be responsible for recording the individual tape assignments on the department's computerized "Usage Log" (tape number, Officer, date, "Time Out").
3. The Midnight Shift Supervisor shall be responsible for recording the "time in" information for each videotape deposited in the Roll Call Room "return cabinet" from the previous shift

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- C. Shift Supervisors and Patrol Officers shall be responsible for:
1. Ensuring that video camera equipped patrol vehicles are given priority assignment over those patrol vehicles not equipped with videotape recording equipment.
 2. Completing the videotape "Assignment Log" after being assigned a videotape
 3. The proper and secure use of the videotape as described in this order
 4. Returning their used videotape to the return storage bin in the Roll Call Room and recording the "return time" in the "Assignment Log". All tapes shall be returned in its plastic holder.

IV. IN-CAR VIDEO RECORDING PROCEDURES

A. Training

1. Patrol Officers will not operate the in-car video system until trained by qualified personnel. "*Qualified personnel*" are those Bloomfield Township employees trained in system use.

B. Systems Check

1. Officers shall check the in-car video system for proper operation Prior to beginning their patrol duties.
 - a. This check will begin with the officer "powering" the recording unit and inserting the assigned blank videotape.
 - b. The tape will then be rewound and checked for audio and video content.
 - c. The recording units date and time displays will also be checked for accuracy at this time.
 - (1) Any malfunction or related problem shall be immediately reported to the Shift Commander with an appropriate maintenance request forwarded.

C. In-Car Video Recording

1. Officers shall begin In-car video recording after completing the "system check" and determining that all audio and video-recording components are operating properly.

2. The *video* recording components shall then remain “powered up” for the remainder of the shift while the *audio* recording components shall be activated during all police related citizen contacts, pursuits, and other times whenever an audio account would further law enforcement purposes. In order to prevent the inadvertent recording of private conversations or potential interference with communications center equipment, in-car videotape microphones shall be turned off at all times while in the police building.
 - a. The In-Car Video Recording Camera may be stopped under the following circumstances:
 - (1) To enable review of the tape.
 - (2) During extended “out-of-service” times when the video or audio record is not needed.
 - (3) While the officer is in court.
 - (4) During meals and breaks.
 - (5) Any other circumstances deemed appropriate and necessary by the shift commander.
3. *Narration:* Officers are encouraged to provide a narration with the video recording prior to each enforcement encounter, including traffic stops. The intent of the narration is to support any written documentation or any probable cause enforcement actions.
4. VHS tapes are capable of 8 hours of continuous record time. Officers assigned to 12-hour shifts will require two (2) tapes to record the entire shift. Officers assigned to 12-hour shifts shall take two (2) VHS tapes out at the beginning of their shift and shall begin recording onto the second tape when the first tape is nearing its 8-hour capacity. When a second tape is not required it shall be noted in the roll call usage ledger and returned to the ready shelf.

V. RETURNING A VIDEOTAPE AFTER USE

- A. At the end of each shift, the officer shall remove his/her assigned videotape(s) from the in-car recording system, “power down” the in-car video recording components, and insert the tape into its plastic case. For those tapes not being held as evidence, deposit the tape into the Roll Call Room storage bin reserved for used tapes. The officer shall then record the tapes return time in the “Assignment Ledger”.

- B. In addition to recording the "time in" field for those tapes being preserved as evidence, the officer shall also record the tapes unique sequential number in the "Serial / VIN #" field of a CLEMIS report form. The tape should then be secured in property "Locker A".

VI. LOGGING IN-CAR VIDEOTAPES AS EVIDENCE

- A. For videotapes held as evidence, officers shall insert the videotape into its plastic holder.
- B. An evidence tag shall then be completed and inserted into the plastic holder so that the tag can be read by viewing through the plastic holder and the videotape secured in property locker "A" for retrieval by the property officer.
- C. The property officer shall then record the tape as "evidence" in the property computer system and store the videotape in the area of the property room reserved for holding in-car videotapes.
- D. Sign-out procedures for all in-car videotapes shall follow established departmental guidelines regarding removal from the property room for viewing, for transportation to court or removal for any other legitimate law enforcement purpose.
- E. In order to control the volume of in-car videotape evidence, the property officer shall periodically distribute completed property disposition forms to the O.I.C. for all in-car videotapes held as evidence.

VII. PERIODIC REVIEW

- A. As a matter of policy, in-car videotape recordings will be periodically reviewed to ensure compliance with this policy. In order to ensure consistent and proper use of the in-car video recording system, the department Administration, or its designee, will periodically review the content of videotapes. The findings of such reviews may become the subject of supervisory counseling, additional training, or disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances.

VIII. DUPLICATE COPIES AND VIEWING OF VIDEOTAPES

- A. Unauthorized duplication or viewing of in-car videotape recordings is strictly prohibited. Under this order, the duplication of in-car videotape recordings are intended to serve legitimate law enforcement purposes only and are to be performed only after receiving authorization from the Chief of Police or his/her designee. Viewing of in-car videotape recordings by a Command Officer may be done at any time provided such viewing serves a legitimate law enforcement or administrative purpose.
- B. Without exception, the duplication or viewing of in-car videotape recordings made outside the scope and intent of this order shall require the direct authorization of the Chief of Police.
- C. Agency members receiving requests for copies of in-car videotape recordings (from attorneys, members of the public, etc.), including the mere viewing of such recordings, shall instruct the requestor to contact the Records Division to process such requests. Agency members needing copies of in-car videotape recordings (for court) shall process their request through the Records Division.

Donald E. Zimmerman
Chief of Police

I have read and understand this G.O.

Signature

Date