



In-Car Video Recording Systems

This enclosure establishes the procedures for using in-car Video Recording Systems (VRS). Following these procedures will support the integrity of the system and its acceptance by the courts.

1. EQUIPMENT

A. VRS devices used by the department consist of the following:

- (1) Camera - Mounted on the patrol vehicle's windshield or headliner by the rear-view mirror.
- (2) Monitor - Mounted on the patrol vehicle's center console or headliner by the rear-view mirror.
- (3) Control Panel - Mounted on the patrol vehicle's center console or headliner by the rear-view mirror.
- (4) Recorder Unit – Either VHS or DVD RAM based system mounted in trunk or vehicle interior with appropriate storage medium.
- (5) Audio Microphone - At least one is provided with each VRS.

B. Purchase of Extra Media and Accessory Equipment

- (1) Work site commanders may purchase VHS tapes (T-160) or DVD RAM discs locally using the department's procurement card and approved purchasing procedures.
 - a. Additional storage media will be necessary for duplication for use as evidence in court.
 - b. It is recommended that each patrol vehicle in which a VRS is installed keep one extra VHS tape (T-160) or DVD RAM disc in the vehicle trunk should a major incident occur toward the end of the tape or disc that is recording.
- (2) Accessory equipment such as microphones and video tape erasers may be purchased by the work site commanders using a post/team Index and PCA number.

2. INITIAL INSTALLATION OF VRS

- A. Upon receipt of the VRS, the work site commander shall contact the Traffic Services Section, Motor Carrier Division, to schedule a technician to perform the installation.
- B. Only a technician that is approved by the manufacturer shall complete the installation. If a VRS is installed by someone other than an approved technician its warranty may be voided.
- C. The VRS shall be installed in a newer patrol vehicle, not in one that is near its scheduled replacement period.

3. TRAINING

- A. Work site commanders that have received VRS devices shall ensure that every assigned enforcement member receives training on their care and operation as soon as possible.



- B. Each enforcement member shall review the manufacturer's VRS operator manual to become proficient in the use and operation of the VRS and all of its features.
- C. Enforcement members are encouraged to work with the VRS and its various features in order to become proficient in their use.

4. VRS OPERATION

- A. Enforcement members shall utilize the VRS whenever they are assigned to patrol with a patrol vehicle that is equipped with a VRS.
- B. Any time the patrol vehicle is in motion, the monitor shall be turned off and shall be placed in the full upright position.
- C. At the beginning of each shift, enforcement members shall ensure they have the necessary equipment, including VHS tapes or DVD RAM discs, microphones, and batteries.

Work site commanders shall ensure there is an ample supply of storage media and batteries for all VRS's assigned to their work sites.

- D. Prior to patrol, each enforcement member shall verify the VRS is functioning properly.
 - (1) Should the VRS fail to operate or develop problems during the shift, the nature of the problem shall be brought to the attention of the shift supervisor.
 - (2) If possible, the enforcement member shall place the patrol vehicle out of service until the VRS is repaired and choose a patrol vehicle with a functioning VRS.
- E. Operating the VRS in Humid Conditions
 - (1) In cold weather, a cold patrol vehicle must be warmed up for approximately five minutes prior to insertion of storage medium. A cold patrol vehicle shall not be placed in a warm building as this may cause condensation to form inside the recorder unit.
 - (2) Condensation may also form inside the recorder unit in very high-humidity conditions.
 - (3) The VRS will not record if it detects condensation inside the recorder unit.
- F. Once the VRS is determined to be working properly, each enforcement member shall verify that the correct date, time, and patrol vehicle number is displayed on the VRS video viewfinder. If corrections need to be made, the enforcement member shall program the correct data into the VRS referring back to the VRS operator's manual whenever necessary.
- G. Video Recording Procedures
 - (1) The VRS may be activated in any one of three ways:
 - a. When the patrol vehicle's emergency lights are activated.
 - b. Manually by the enforcement member from the control panel inside the patrol vehicle.
 - c. Remotely by the enforcement member from outside the patrol vehicle using his or her portable transmitter.



- (2) Enforcement members shall activate both the audio and video recording functions of the VRS whenever engaged in emergency vehicle operations, and are encouraged to do so on most citizen contacts. They shall leave the system activated during the duration of the emergency vehicle operation or until the citizen contact has ended.
- (3) Enforcement members may choose to activate the VRS before violator or citizen contact in order to record any preliminary information that may otherwise be missed.
- (4) The VRS system is programmed so that it can only be turned off manually at the control panel inside the patrol vehicle.

H. Audio Procedures

- (1) A microphone shall be worn by the driver of the patrol vehicle. If the VRS is equipped with additional microphones, a microphone shall be worn by all enforcement members in the patrol vehicle.
- (2) The microphone transmitter shall be worn on the outside of the enforcement member's uniform, either in the holder located on their Sam Browne belt or in the inside pocket of their car-duty jacket.

The microphone transmitter and its on/off switch shall be easily accessible.

- (3) If equipped, the microphone transmitter's antenna shall be extended. If the microphone transmitter's cord serves as its antenna, it shall not be coiled.
- (4) The microphone will work only when the system is on "record" and the microphone transmitter is "on." The VRS will activate from the transmitter's "stop" position if the remote switch has been activated at the control panel inside the patrol vehicle.
- (5) It is recommended that the microphone transmitter's remote switch be activated whenever exiting the patrol vehicle.
- (6) Enforcement members shall be aware that with some VRS models, driving through a low-frequency radio field with the VRS in the remote mode may activate the system (both audio and video) without their knowledge.

5. STORAGE MEDIA RETENTION AND DUPLICATION PROCEDURES

Work site commanders shall contact their local prosecutor(s) for guidance on the retention and storage of recorded media to be used as evidence. The retention period for evidential media shall be at the discretion of the local prosecutor. In addition to any local requirements, the following procedures shall be followed:

A. Recorded Media Retention

- (1) Each VRS shall have no less than 30 VHS tapes or DVD RAM discs assigned to it.
- (2) Each VRS shall be numbered after the patrol vehicle to which it is assigned, and the recorded media shall be sequentially numbered

Example: Tape #1 from the Battle Creek Post's patrol vehicle 5705 would be numbered VRS 05-01, tape #2 would be numbered VRS 05-02, and so on.



- (3) Work site commanders shall establish an appropriate location within their individual work sites for the retention and storage of all recorded media.
- (4) Durations
 - a. Recorded media related to any incident involving the death or serious injury of any person shall be maintained at the work site for a minimum of three years from the date of the incident. Such media shall be maintained regardless of whether it actually captured the death or serious injury.
 - b. Recorded media related to any incident involving a traffic crash or member use of force shall be maintained at the work site for a minimum of three years from the date of the incident unless the media (audio or video) did not capture the incident.
 - c. All other recorded media shall be retained for a period of at least 30 days at the work site, unless it contains indicators of criminal activity such as reckless driving, field sobriety tests, fleeing. If so, the tape should be removed from rotation and stored as evidence as described in the following Sections. If not, the recorded media may be erased and reused after 30 days.
 - d. If a VHS tape or DVD RAM disc is needed for a court hearing or other reason that would require it to be retained longer than 30 days, the medium shall be removed from the normal rotation and filed in the "SAVE" section of the recorded media storage area.
 - e. If a VHS tape or DVD RAM disc is needed as evidence for a major case such as a court trial, the medium shall be marked "original," permanently removed from the normal rotation, and shall be handled as manufactured evidence.

If the media in question is a VHS tape, the "record over" security tabs at the back of the VHS tape shall be broken off to prevent an accidental recording over the tapes that will be retained as evidence.
 - f. Work sites may elect to retain recorded media for longer periods to satisfy local prosecutor requirements and accommodate court schedules.
- (5) Prior to destroying or reusing such media, the member's supervisor shall review the media and document the results of the review in a supplemental report.
- (6) If a lawsuit against the department or member has been initiated, no recorded media may be destroyed or reused, regardless of the content of the recording, unless approved in writing by the Executive Division.

B. Recorded Media Duplication

- (1) Duplication of recorded media will be done locally at the work site level. It is recommended that the enforcement member in charge of the investigation make the copy to simplify the chain of custody.
- (2) Duplication may be done at the post using two VCR or DVD RAM recorders, or a suitably equipped personal computer. The resulting product shall be clearly marked as a copy.
- (3) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests for Recorded Media



- a. Only the Freedom of Information (FOI) Unit, Criminal Justice Information Center, shall release VHS tapes or DVD RAM discs to fulfill FOI requests for duplication of specific incidents.
- b. A FOIA request for a VHS tape or DVD RAM disc must be made using a Request for Public Records form, RI-101, which shall be completed and forwarded to the FOI Unit by the requestor.
- c. Upon receipt, the FOI Unit shall request a copy of only the specific incident from the work site. The local work site shall make a copy of the requested incident and forward it to the FOI Unit.
- d. The FOI Unit shall release the VHS tape or DVD RAM disc according to Freedom of Information Act rules. The FOI Unit shall determine processing costs.

(4) Training Material

Enforcement members involved in critical incidents or those that they feel would otherwise have training value, or supervisors aware of such incidents, shall submit a copy of the recorded media of the incident to the Human Resources and Training Division as soon as practical.

6. MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND EQUIPMENT PROCEDURES

A. VRS Maintenance

- (1) Work site commanders shall review the specific maintenance requirements and procedures in their VRS's operator manual.
- (2) Under normal circumstances, the VRS requires minimal maintenance. However, as with most sophisticated electronic equipment, care must be taken to prevent damage to the system.
 - a. A brush-style cleaner tape must be periodically run through the VRS or VHS based systems, and a light dusting of the components contained within the vehicle interior is necessary
 - b. Do not spray cleaners directly on the electronic components.
 - c. Do not use a dry head cleaner.

B. VRS Repair

If a VRS or a component is in need of repair, it shall immediately be brought to the attention of the shift supervisor who shall notify the work site commander. Equipment repairs shall be handled at the work site level in the following manner:

- (1) Re-check the failed features
- (2) Contact the VRS manufacturer's service representative or technician assigned to your area. A list of these technicians and their telephone numbers can be found on the MSP Intranet site at:

http://mspweb.state.mi.us/division/special_operations/tss/vrepair.pdf



- (3) Explain to the service representative what is not working properly.
- (4) Determine how these items are to be repaired and the best course of action.
- (5) Determine if the repairs are covered under warranty.
- (6) If the work site needs to ship a component of the VRS to the manufacturer, the contents shall be insured and shipped directly to the manufacturer.
- (7) If the repair requires removal and re-installation of the VRS, only a factory-approved technician shall do so.
- (8) Billing and payment of repair services shall be done directly by the work site, using the work site specific Index and PCA number provided by the Field Services Bureau.

The work site shall not send payment invoices for repair services to headquarters.

C. Transfer of VRS

- (1) When it is necessary to transfer a VRS from a patrol vehicle that is scheduled to be turned into Department of Management and Budget, Vehicle and Travel Services, for replacement, the work site commander will contact the Traffic Services Section, Traffic Safety Division, to schedule a technician to complete the transfer.
- (2) The VRS will normally be transferred to a new or lower-mileage patrol vehicle.
- (3) Only a technician who is approved by the manufacturer shall complete the transfer.

7. SUPERVISORY USE OF MOBILE VIDEO

- A. Patrol media may be reviewed in conjunction with a citizen complaint, investigation, pending court case, or to ensure compliance with Official Orders and local policies.
- B. Patrol media may be used in conjunction with the Field Training Officer program to assist the Field Training Officer with the evaluation of a probationary Trooper.

8. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Work site commanders shall extend invitations to local prosecuting attorneys, judges, magistrates, and members of the press to attend a demonstration of the VRS so they can become familiar with its operation.

DIRECTOR

