



CRYSTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

Department Policy Manual

TITLE: Use of Audio/Visual Recording Equipment in Police Vehicles
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the operation and use of audio/digital visual recording equipment (squad cameras) installed in a police vehicle.

PROCEDURES

The squad camera will automatically power on and off without officer intervention. Officers will log onto the systems at the beginning of their shift. Officers shall synchronize their body worn camera (BWC) with their squad camera by docking the BWC in the vehicle at the beginning of their shift.

Officers shall report any malfunctions of the system related to the camera operation or a failure to synchronize with a BWC to the system administrator.

The set up of the audio/visual system with the date, time, and vehicle identification will be performed only by authorized system administrators or IT support personnel.

The squad camera will start recording when any of the following actions take place:

- By pressing the record button on a synced body worn camera;
- By pressing the record button on the squad camera control panel;
- Upon activation of the step 3 squad emergency lighting system;
- When the system detects a pre-determined acceleration or “G” load indicative of an impact or crash;
- When the patrol vehicle speed exceeds 90mph as determined by squad camera GPS.

The primary purpose for using squad cameras is to obtain evidence; therefore, officers will activate the system to record the following:

- All traffic stops, pursuits, or emergency vehicle operation;
- The handling of other incidents which, in the judgement 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.
- Officers have the discretion to manually begin recording as circumstances may warrant.
- Officers are required to record all back-seat activity while people are detained in squads with back seat cameras installed.
- 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 and the officer believes there will be no evidence collected by the recording.

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.

AUDIO/VISUAL EVIDENCE CUSTODY, CONTROL & REUSE

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

Digital recordings will be maintained in accordance with the State of MN data retention statutes and stored on the servers of the contracted squad video vendor.

Officers shall select a recording category for each recording. Officers shall enter a case number in the squad camera when applicable.

No officer shall erase a video recording. Any purge of recordings shall follow MN data retention laws and the data retention schedule.

Mn Statute 13.82 Sub. 17 orders that law enforcement agencies shall withhold public access to data which would reveal the identity of an undercover law enforcement officer. Officers shall note in their report if an undercover officer appears in any recordings.

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 and shall only be utilized for official Crystal Police Department business, prosecution, or investigative needs. No employee shall record, retain, or upload police department data or recordings to any personal devices.

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

In special cases, a recording made on a squad camera may be of public interest. No videos shall be posted to any forum, social media platform, or released to any public facing media without approval of the Chief of Police or a designee, after undergoing an evaluation of data practice law by the records division.