In-Car Cameras/Body-Worn Cameras

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use, management, storage, and retrieval of audio-visual recordings by in-car video systems or body cameras and to reduce liability against the DPS, capture evidence and to be used as a training tool.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the DPS for each uniformed officer to ensure that his recording equipment is operational at the beginning of, and during the duration of his shift. The video recording equipment shall be used on a daily basis, to document the day-to-day contacts with the public. All uniformed personnel shall follow the following procedure.

PROCEDURE

The DPS has adopted the use of in-car video cameras and body cameras to accomplish the following:

* To provide an accurate depiction of events for courtroom presentation, administrative review, etc.
* To accurately capture statements and events during an incident or investigation
* To enhance the officer’s ability to document and review statements and actions for report writing purposes and courtroom preparation
* To provide an impartial measurement for self-critique and field evaluation
* To assist in the ongoing training of officers

GENERAL PROCEDURES

The recording equipment will be activated either automatically when the vehicle’s emergency lights are turned on or manually by the officer. Other triggering events may be used depending on the abilities of the camera system to trigger recordings. The officer’s safety is the primary consideration for operating the system and placement of the system components within the vehicle or on his person. Officers are trained in the use and operation the recording equipment prior to use. Any malfunctions of the equipment are to be reported to the Chief as soon as possible after discovery.

The following incidents are audio and video recorded:

* All traffic stops or times of traffic control
* All investigative citizen contacts, including civil standbys or complaints
* All emergency responses in which the patrol vehicle’s emergency lights are activated
* All motor vehicle pursuits
* All crimes in progress or backup situations
* Any arrest, transports of belligerent or violent subjects
* Any other situation or event that the officer deems appropriate to record or which should reasonably be recorded.

Digital Video Evidence

Officers will wear their agency issued BWC while on duty. The camera should be worn at chest level, utilizing the manufacturer supplied magnetic mounting systems. The BWC will be placed on “standby” mode at the beginning of each tour of duty. The camera should be activated during each traffic stop or for any other citizen encounters. At the end of each shift, the camera will be placed in the docking station located in the DPS office for downloading and re-charging. Officers shall not attempt to erase, alter, modify, or tamper with any digital recording or digital recording equipment when retrieving video incidents for viewing, officers are limited to accessing only their own recordings. Accessing or attempting to access other officer’s video is not permitted.

The body camera recording devices utilized by the DPS records and stores events onto a digital storage computer maintained by an outside vendor, (TASER/Evidence.com).

Recorded material stored on the server or as evidence may be periodically purged upon reaching its retention date. Long term retention will be done by creating a copy from the server which is maintained through Evidence.com.

Copying or release of recorded incidents is not allowed in any manner without the authorization of the Chief. The videos are not to be viewed or shared for viewing in any unprofessional manner, nor are they to be used for personal profit or gain.