



VIA TRANSIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures



Section 702 – Digital Photography / Video Recording Procedures

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| Forms Referenced in Procedure: | | Related Procedures: | <u>Section 404.</u> |

.01 INTRODUCTION

- A. This procedure establishes guidelines to maintain the integrity and consistency of the handling of video, digital photographic images as well as equipment.
- B. The purpose of photography and imaging video in law enforcement is to record visible details, evidence, and observable material. Photography/Video is used to visually document observable facts. The VIA Transit Police Department recognizes Video and digital photography technology as a tool for documentation in both Criminal and Internal Investigations.

.02 POLICY FOR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

- A. Members will use only Department-issued video equipment, digital photographic equipment and storage media. (Except as listed in .03(B) below)
- B. Members will not use any equipment outlined in .02 (A) above for personal purposes.
- C. Members will not manipulate video, photographs.
- D. All video, photographs taken with departmental equipment are the property of the VIA Transit Police Department.
- E. Members taking digital images of potential evidentiary value must follow Section .03, *Recording Digital Images*, and Section .04, *Downloading and Submission of Images*, in this procedure.

.03 RECORDING DIGITAL IMAGES

- A. The use of personal digital photographic equipment, including any personal digital device capable of capturing digital images, by members for evidentiary photographs is prohibited.
- B. The only exception to .03(A) (above), and procedure 404 section .03(C) (personal cellphones), would be when a member determines that circumstances are of such a critical nature that photographic images are immediately required and department-approved digital photographic equipment is not readily available, members may use their personal digital photographic equipment. When used:
 - 1. The digital photographs taken with VIA issued cell phone or a personal cell phone (under this exception) are the property of the VIA Transit Police Department.
 - 2. Members will not take any additional digital photos (with their VIA issued cell phone) until the evidentiary digital photographic images have been removed by officer or VIA Transit Police Investigator.
 - 3. Members agree to provide full access to their personal cell phone used under this exception (as necessary) to allow the VIA Transit Police Investigator to be able to successfully recover any evidentiary digital photographic images.
 - 4. Members will notify the VIA Transit Police Investigator or their supervisor immediately, but no later than the end of their tour of duty, when they utilize their personal equipment for taking digital photographs under these exceptions.



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5. Members will provide full details of the circumstances requiring the use of personal cell phone for taking digital photographs in their report.
- C. Any evidentiary video, photographs taken by members with or without department equipment are subject to seizure by the VIA Transit Police Department.
- D. Prior to the use of a digital camera for a case or event, the media card/camera will be formatted.
- E. Each case or event where digital photographs are taken will be placed on separate media cards. It may be necessary to use more than one card per case or event.
- F. An image depicting the case number or name of event, the date, the location, and photographer, will be recorded. In the event that the location of photography changes, an additional image should be recorded with the updated information.
- G. At the completion of the case or event, the media card will be downloaded as soon as possible and no later than the end of the member's tour of duty.
- H. No images will be deleted from the media card(s) prior to download.
- I. The images will only be viewed at the time of recording to determine that the necessary images are being recorded correctly. When the images are viewed they will be viewed in the camera that recorded them. At no time will the media card be removed and viewed from a card reader.
- J. At no time will the original evidentiary photograph or digital image be altered or enhanced. Any required enhancements, to copies of the original evidentiary photographic or digital images, will be done solely by the VIA Transit Police Investigator.
- K. Digital evidentiary photographs shall not be copied, printed, or used for personal or non-departmental use.

.04 DOWNLOADING AND SUBMISSION OF IMAGES

- A. The image will be downloaded to a single-write media, and sent to the VIA Transit Police Investigator. This single-write media becomes the original.
- B. The media will be marked as "Master."
- C. The media will be labeled by legibly printing the following information:
 1. The case number of the offense or event;
 2. The date the images were downloaded to the single-write media;
 3. The time the images were downloaded to the single-write media;
 4. The photographer's name and badge number; and
 5. The individual's name performing download if different from photographer.
- D. Prior to submitting the media to the VIA Transit Police Investigator, the downloaded information will be checked to ensure that the download was successful. Place your initials on the media after verification.
- E. The Department recognizes cases that require immediate access to all available information. Therefore, it is permissible in those cases to make one working copy for the VIA Transit Police Investigator. Officers wishing to utilize this process must follow their unit's SOP for control and handling of this copy. At no time during this process will more than one copy be generated.



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1. The media will be marked as “Copy.”
 2. The media will be labeled as directed in Section .04D, in this procedure.
 3. The images and the media will be maintained in the follow-up unit’s case file.
 4. The media will be returned to the VIA Transit Police Investigator when requested by the supervisor.
- F. Once the download has been determined to be successful, the media card will be formatted and returned to service.
- G. Images will not be saved or stored in any other manner than what has been specifically addressed in this procedure.

05 PRESERVATION OF DIGITAL EVIDENCE

- A. Digital Photographs
1. Digital photographs shall be uploaded to Crimestar under the property section of the offense report. Full size printed copies of the photos are attached to the printed copy of the offense report. The printed offense report with printed photographs shall be forwarded to the VIA Transit Police Investigator.
 2. Should Crimestar be down or unable to accept digital photographs, the officer should store the photographs on the server (O:\Policecommons\photos_and_videos) under a folder titled by the case number of the offense report. Document the disposition of all photos in the narrative of the report.
- B. Digital Video from service vehicles, patrol vehicles, stationary video cameras at VIA properties or from other persons/businesses, shall be obtained / maintained in the following manner:
1. Service Vehicles and Patrol Vehicles
 - a. Call or submit an E-Mail request to the VIA Video specialist requesting the desired videos.
 - b. The VIA Video specialist copies the video from their server and places the copy into a file accessible to the VIA Investigator. The video is accessed by opening the “Video Viewer” software application.
 - c. Videos shall only be copied to a Compact Disc or DVD by a supervisor or VIA Transit Police Investigator should the video be required for submission to the District Attorney’s office for prosecution.
 - d. Details on the acquisition of the video and location of storage shall be documented in the offense report or supplemental report.
 2. Stationary Video Cameras at VIA Properties
 - a. Download the desired video from the Victor Unified Client software.
 - b. Downloaded videos are to be stored on the server (O:\policecommons\photos_and_videos) under a folder titled by the case number of the offense report.
 - c. Videos shall only be copied to a Compact Disc or DVD by a supervisor or VIA Transit Police Investigator should the video be required for submission to the District Attorney’s office for prosecution.
 - d. Details on the acquisition of the video and location of storage shall be documented in the offense report or supplemental report.



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3. Outside video sources (Businesses, residences, non-police cellphones, etc.)
 - a. Request the business manager or property owner to provide a copy of the video. Should the manager or property owner refuse to provide a copy, a subpoena may be required to obtain the video.
 - b. The video shall be stored on the server (O:\policecommons\photos_and_videos) under a folder titled by the case number of the offense report
 - c. Details on the acquisition of the video and location of storage shall be documented in the offense report or supplemental report.