

Policy: 2104.6, Forensic Video Lab

Effective Date: 10/30/2024

Distribution Group: All Employees

Review Responsibility: Forensic Section Manager

Accreditation Chapter(s): 18.13

Chief of Police: Eric D. Smith

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Forensic Video Lab is to provide specialized technical support to the Orlando Police Department in the accomplishment of its mission.

II. POLICY

The primary mission of the Forensic Video Lab is to support active criminal investigations; therefore, this type of work will generally take precedence over all other requests. Other services provided include video production for training and public relations as well as documentation of Departmental special events. The Forensic Video Lab is staffed during normal duty hours, Monday-Friday, by the Forensic Video Analyst. Service and support may be provided during other hours with prior approval from the Forensics Manager or the Crime Center Division Commander.

III. DEFINITIONS

None

IV. PROCEDURES

1. INVESTIGATIVE SUPPORT

The Forensic Video Lab provides the following services in support of criminal investigations:

- a. Retrieving surveillance video related to criminal investigations.
- b. Creating demonstrative video exhibits for court
- c. Duplication of surveillance media.
- d. Still photographs from surveillance media.
- e. Fulfilling legal requests for body worn camera video to governmental agencies.

Assigned detectives or officers seeking temporary assistance or problem-area monitoring shall contact the assigned Electronic Surveillance Support Team supervisor or detective in the Fugitive Investigative Unit for assistance or recommendations.

1.1 SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS

Surveillance operations may also include digitally recording special events, protests, and other civil unrest for intelligence purposes.

1.2 DOCUMENTATION OF CRIME SCENES OR DISASTER SCENES

Video documentation of crime scenes is generally limited to homicide cases or officer-involved shootings but may include other violent crimes if the detective feels it would significantly aid in the investigation or court presentation of the case.

Video documentation may also be requested for mass casualty incidents or other disaster scenes if it is felt it would significantly aid in the investigation. This type of documentation may also include on-scene recorded statements/interviews with witnesses or victims.

1.3 DUPLICATION OF SURVEILLANCE MEDIA AND STILL PHOTOGRAPHS

Commercial establishments frequently have video surveillance systems that may have captured an incident and may aid in identifying the suspects.

The officers or CSO dispatched to the incident shall be responsible for retrieving any surveillance media from the business and placing them in Property and Evidence. Because the time-date indicator on the surveillance system may be incorrect, it is important to make note of both the time and date on the media AND the correct date and time. This information can be crucial when attempting to view the incident at a later time. If the private system offers only a digital download to a disc or thumb drive, officers or CSOs shall call a Forensic Video Analyst to the scene to attempt to retrieve the data. Be sure to advise the Forensic Video Analyst of any system-specific information before they leave the Video Lab so they may bring all necessary equipment or blank media.

Requests for duplication or still photographs must be made using the Forensic Video Lab Work Request form, available on OPD Online under the Crime Center tab.

1.4 REQUESTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The person requesting Forensic Video Lab support shall be responsible to:

- a. Schedule the operation far enough in advance to allow proper planning and scheduling of personnel and equipment.
- b. Provide the Forensic Video Lab with accurate and thorough information regarding the case, including the objectives to be met by video support.
- c. Actively participate and assist as requested, including providing or arranging for any special equipment that may be necessary (e.g., gas masks or body armor).
- d. Make all necessary arrangements for access to the target location and/or surveillance point and provide the Forensic Video Analyst with a point of contact at that location.
- e. Provide specific directions (preferably a map) to the target location.
- f. Provide or arrange for adequate security of personnel and/or equipment during surveillance operations.
- g. Submit all evidentiary media to Property and Evidence

2. OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

2.1 DUPLICATION OF MEDIA

The Forensic Video Lab has limited capabilities for duplicating a variety of media. Duplication will only be permitted for investigations, training, or informational purposes related to official department business. Any “copy block” technology, or any other means present on the source media, which is meant to prohibit duplication of copyrighted material, will not be circumvented unless in support of an investigation.

2.2 VIDEO PRODUCTION REQUESTS

Video production is any project requiring editing to produce the finished product. All video productions, even short projects, require accurate and detailed planning and coordination. The steps involved in video production are:

- a. Contact a Forensic Video Analyst to discuss the project concept.
- b. Write a script as directed by a Forensic Video Analyst and have the content approved by the requester’s section manager (and Police Legal Advisor, if necessary).
- c. Meet with a Forensic Video Analyst for pre-production planning.

The Forensics Manager shall have final approval authority of the script for any matters relating to the actual production. The content of the script is the responsibility of the requester.

No video production will commence without a finalized script approved by the Forensics Manager and the requester’s section manager (and, if necessary, the Police Legal Advisor).

2.3 VIDEO SUPPORT OF SPECIAL EVENTS

The Forensic Video Lab may be requested to document or provide limited technical support for Departmental special events. Support for events requiring overtime must be approved by the Forensics Manager.

Examples of authorized special events are funerals for personnel killed in the line of duty if requested by the family.

The Forensic Video Lab is prohibited from recording social events, such as retirement or going-away parties unless approved by the Chief of Police.

2.4 REQUESTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The person requesting the services of the Forensic Video Lab shall be responsible for:

- a. Scheduling the project far enough in advance to allow proper planning and scheduling of personnel and equipment.
- b. Actively participating and assisting as requested, including providing or arranging for actors, props, vehicles, and any other special equipment that may be necessary.
- c. Identify and make all necessary arrangements for shooting locations and provide the Forensic Video Lab with a point of contact at that location.
- d. Provide specific directions (preferably a map) to the shooting locations.
- e. Provide or arrange for adequate security of personnel and/or equipment while shooting on location.
- f. Assist as necessary during post-production including coordinating talent for narration, providing graphics for illustrations, and providing input as needed during editing.
- g. Review and approve the final product and coordinate distribution as needed.

2.5 CID INTERVIEW ROOM VIDEO SYSTEM

The Forensic Video Lab shall be responsible for periodic operational monitoring and arranging for maintenance of the CID Interview Room Video System. All requests for duplication of recorded material from these interview rooms must be made promptly, allowing for holidays and weekends, to ensure the requested video is copied and archived before being over-written by the system, which generally happens on the 30th day of existence.

When a video is associated with a criminal or administrative investigation, it is also the responsibility of the member requesting the video to ensure that at least one copy of the recorded material is entered into OPD Property and Evidence.

V. FORMS AND APPENDICES

None

VI. REFERENCES

This policy rescinds Policy and Procedure 2104.5

Related Policies: Not Applicable

Related Laws: Not Applicable