

89-009 Use of Camcorders

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services



USE OF CAMCORDERS

The purpose of the camcorder is to make available video evidence of various types of incidents, and to document the Department's enforcement decisions.

USE POLICY

The use of the camcorder is required when dispersing large parties (FOD 86-30). Its use is strongly encouraged for any other incident (due to its size or severity) or where political, religious, or cultural issues have created a disturbance in which the Department is required to restore order. The camcorder can be used to document actual crimes if available at the time of the incident. The camcorder can also be utilized for training or any other purpose.

Officer safety shall be considered when using the camcorder. The operator of the camcorder, whose attention is in the documentation of an event, is highly vulnerable. A back-up/observer, preferably the Field Sergeant, should be used to protect the operator of the camcorder in any situation which may pose a threat to that operator.

Media Resources should be contacted to request reproduction of any video cassette. The Technical Crew under P.S.T.D. should be contacted to request still photographs made from video tape for court presentation. The investigating deputy shall be responsible for making these request.

WATCH COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITY

The watch commander shall review all tapes relating to arrests or documentation which may later result in a civil suit/or a complaint.

The watch commander shall advise the station commander by memorandum of the existence of the tape cassette and any performance inconsistencies which the watch commander may have observed.

RETENTION OF TAPE CASSETTES

Cassettes used in arrest situations should be treated in a manner consistent with any other piece of evidence. The name of the deputy operating the camcorder should be noted in the report. The cassette should be noted in the "evidence held" section of a report, and then marked, tagged, and placed into evidence.

Cassettes used in these situations are subject to Section 26202 of the Government Code and shall be

retained for a period of two years. Sixty-minute tapes shall be used except in long term, ongoing incidents when 90-minute tapes are appropriate.

Cassette tapes shall be stored in a cool, dry area similar to storage used for the station audio tapes. Temperatures in excess of 80 degrees Fahrenheit should be avoided.

TRAINING

It shall be the responsibility of each station's unit commander to ensure that at least one person on each shift is trained to operate the camcorder. These operators shall be designated on the in-service sheet.

Media Resources is the designated provider for this training.

INVENTORY

The camcorder shall be considered a "Fixed Asset" and documented accordingly. Warranty cards and associated paperwork shall be completed and forwarded to the respective region's budget sergeant.

MAINTENANCE

Excessive heat and dust can cause severe damage to the camcorders. They shall not be left in any area susceptible to high temperatures for extended periods of time.

Proper care should be used as to not damage/scratch the camera lens. The lens should only be cleaned with tissues manufactured expressly for this purpose.
