



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

County of Los Angeles  
Sheriff's Department Headquarters  
4700 Ramona Boulevard  
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169



May 25, 2012

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**REPORT BACK FROM THE SHERIFF REGARDING PROPOSED POLICIES FOR  
VIDEO SURVEILLANCE, INCLUDING PROVISIONS AND CRITERIA FOR  
MAINTENANCE, STORAGE, ACCESS, RETRIEVAL, AND TRAINING**

On May 14, 2012, your Board requested that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) provide "an advance copy of the proposed policy prior to publishing and implementation as it relates to video surveillance, including the applicable provisions and criteria for the maintenance, storage, access, and retrieval processes, as well as training of personnel."

**SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT RESPONSE**

Attached is a draft of the proposed policy you requested. Consistent with your request, the policy has not yet been published or implemented. This proposed policy was reviewed and approved by County Counsel. As a courtesy, the Department will wait for a response from your Board prior to formally implementing and publishing into the Department's Policy.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Commander James Hellmold at (213) 893-5003.

Sincerely,

LEROY D. BACA  
SHERIFF

*A Tradition of Service*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This revision of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Custody Division Manual (CDM) amends section 5-05/100.00, Video Recording Procedures of the CDM.

This proposed revision to the CDM supersedes all previous versions of this document.

This proposal was submitted by the Commander Management Task Force (CMTF), following working group meetings and legal consultation. For questions, concerns, or additional information contact Commander James Hellmold (213) 893-5002.

**5-05/100.00 VIDEO RECORDING PROCEDURES**

The Sheriff's Department utilizes video cameras in Custody Division to enhance safety and effectiveness for personnel in the performance of their duties, and to provide a reviewable electronic record of incidents.

Regardless of the method of recording, use of video equipment at a Sheriff's Department facility by personnel shall be restricted to law enforcement functions, and is subject to all applicable laws, policies and procedures.

**Portable Video Cameras**

Portable Video Cameras are handheld devices used to record incidents, interviews, crime scenes, and any other situation requiring an audio/visual accounting.

**Recording Incidents with a Portable Video Camera:**

Reasonable attempts shall be made to record all significant incidents with a portable video camera including, but not limited to, the following:

- Inmate disturbances,
- Cell extractions,
- Recalcitrant inmates,
- Application of restraints,
- Medical removals which pose a significant risk or have the potential to become violent,
- Use of force by Department personnel,
- Housing area or facility searches,
- Any incident/event which may pose risk management and/or liability issues,
- Emergency Response Team (ERT) activations, except for training exercises.

Video recording equipment shall only be used by trained personnel who have successfully completed the "Video Operator Course" presented by the Training Unit -

Custody Division. The training sergeant at each unit shall maintain a list of trained personnel.

A designated video operator shall respond to the incident and begin recording, using the wide angle field of view. Since the first obligation of on scene supervisors is safety, and leadership of personnel, supervisors should not assume the role of video operator under most circumstances. The video operator shall state the date, time, their name, rank, employee number, location, and provide factual narrative during the incident, i.e., "watch commander is on scene," "Emergency Response Team is on scene," name civilians on scene such as a nurse or mental health clinician evaluating the inmate, "facility is on lock down," and any necessary details about the incident. Only factual information shall be narrated while recording on video.

Once recording on video has begun, it shall not be paused or stopped until the entire incident has been brought to completion in order to establish a time line for the incident. If a battery, tape, or memory storage device change becomes necessary, the video operator shall re-introduce his/her name, rank, employee number, time and state the reason for the interruption. The video tape or memory storage device should include documenting injuries, evidence, emergency medical treatment, and statements by all concerned parties.

In the case of emergency medical treatment, recording on video shall continue after medical staff arrives and during the course of medical treatment, until the inmate is completely stable, no longer resisting, and the medical staff has completed their tasks. Outside medical personnel, rendering aid, while inside a County jail facility, shall also be recorded on video until they leave the facility.

When documenting inmate injuries, all inmates in or near the incident should be captured on video. When documenting a large inmate disturbance, the incident commander should be recorded on video directing inmates with injuries to come forward. A deputy should state the inmate's name, booking number, and housing location.

The inmate should describe his/her injury(s) and how it occurred. The injury(s) should be thoroughly recorded on video.

Because the dynamics of an incident are constantly changing, the video operator should periodically pan around the entire area to show as much of the surroundings as possible, personnel present, and conversations between inmate(s) and personnel. Whenever possible, only the on scene supervisor should make the decision when to stop recording.

### Fixed Video Surveillance

Fixed Video Surveillance are cameras permanently or temporarily mounted at designated locations to continuously record all activities.

The primary objectives of fixed video surveillance in Custody operations are the following:

- Record/Document events as they occur
- Provide real-time intelligence for Department personnel
- Provide video evidence of actions by inmates and staff
- Produce a deterrent effect against inmate violence
- Post-incident analysis of jail operations

### Handling and Retention of Video Recordings

Department personnel shall make immediate notification to the watch commander when they become aware of a significant incident, which may have been captured on video. The watch commander shall determine if a significant incident was captured on video, and review the video as soon as reasonably possible. Department personnel may review the video in order to detail his/her actions, unless there is evidence of misconduct on video, if the involved employee's account of the incident is not consistent with the video, or if the involved employee failed to make proper notifications of an incident as required by Department Policy. Only the watch commander or unit commander may authorize video footage to be copied or reviewed.

If the watch commander determines a recording may have evidentiary value, or should be preserved by the Department for official use, the recording shall remain on the server and saved to a video medium, such as a CD or DVD. A copy of the video shall be retained in accordance with applicable laws, Department policies and procedures regarding handling of video and/or evidence.

Copies of video on CD, DVD, or memory storage device shall be properly labeled with the following:

- Inmate's name and booking number,
- URN number, Reference number, and/or Administrative Case Number,
- Date, time, and location of incident,
- Brief description of incident,
- Name, rank, and employee number of video operator, or person who created CD or DVD if incident captured on a fixed surveillance system.

Incidents not associated with an URN or Reference Number, recorded on video, shall be held at the discretion of the watch commander, but no less than 25 months. Fixed video surveillance cameras will be recorded continuously and retained in electronic

storage devices for no less than 25 months, unless otherwise directed in writing by the Custody Division Chief.

If there are no video trained personnel on-duty to retrieve a recording, the watch commander shall notify the unit commander and the Video Equipment Manager of the following:

- Request to save potentially recorded video footage onto a DVD or CD
- Date, time, URN/Administrative Case Number
- Description of the incident
- Description of what may have been recorded on the surveillance system
- Location of the incident and specific surveillance cameras which may have recorded the incident

The requesting watch commander shall follow up to ensure the requested surveillance recording is saved and retained in accordance with established procedures as described above. The watch commander shall ensure that all reportable incidents clearly document whether or not an incident was captured on video.

#### Unit Commander Responsibilities

Unit commanders shall develop and implement procedures for video recording significant incidents occurring at their facility, and ensuring proper handling and preservation of video, as prescribed by Department Policy. The unit commander shall designate a sergeant to be the Video Equipment Manager to ensure the maintenance of all video recording equipment and video storage devices.

#### General Video Equipment Inspection

Watch commanders shall ensure all video recording equipment is inspected once per shift and noted in the Watch Commanders Log. This requires the watch commander to ensure that personnel who use video equipment inspect their devices at the beginning of each shift to confirm the following:

- All video recording equipment is accounted for,
- All equipment is working properly,
  - Necessary repairs are documented and the proper paperwork completed and forwarded to the designated person.

#### Portable Video Equipment Inspection:

- A minimum of two batteries per camera is recommended; all batteries shall be recharged at least once per week whether used or not, and shall not be left in the charger.

- The camera should be pre-set to record in the "SP" or high quality record mode, and should be pre-set not to record the time and/or date; the video operator shall document this verbally when recording begins,
- There should be a blank tape or memory storage device (with a blank label attached to it) in the video camera and at least two additional blank tapes or memory storage devices available at the beginning of each shift,
  - The video tape or memory storage device in the portable camera should be capable of recording 120 minutes of video in the "SP" record mode.
- The portable video equipment inspection shall be documented in the housing unit's Uniform Daily Activity Log.

Fixed Video Surveillance Equipment Inspection

- The designated Video Equipment Manager shall ensure all high-definition cameras are recording at no less than 5 frames per second (FPS), with picture resolution no less than 720p, unless otherwise directed in writing by the Custody Division Chief;
- The watch commander shall confirm all surveillance cameras are properly functioning and recording at the beginning of each shift;
- The watch commander shall document any malfunctions to the designated Video Equipment Manager;
- The fixed video equipment inspection shall be documented on the facility Watch Commander's Log

Questions regarding video operator procedures, training, video recording equipment, and requests for video editing or copies may be directed to the Custody Division Headquarters Training Video Unit at (213) 893-5171.

Revised 05/22/12  
Revised 06/29/11  
12/10/01 CDM