

Mobile Audio Video

304.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Aransas Pass Police Department has equipped each marked patrol car with a Mobile Audio and Video (MAV) recording system. The MAV is designed to assist and complement patrol officers in the performance of their duties. The MAV is used to record certain activities by providing a visual and/or audio record. Video recordings are intended to provide an unbiased visual/audio record of the incident and to supplement the officer's report.

In lieu of the MAV system, officers are also equipped with a body worn camera system manufactured by Taser. The optimal preference is that officers utilize both camera systems. However, if unavailable or down, the department gives preference to utilization of the Taser Camera systems.

304.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Activate - Any process that causes the MAV system to transmit or store video or audio data in an active mode.

In-car camera system and Mobile Audio Video (MAV) system - Synonymous terms which refer to any system that captures audio and video signals, that is capable of installation in a vehicle, and that includes at minimum, a camera, microphone, recorder and monitor.

MAV technician - Personnel certified or trained in the operational use and repair of MAVs, duplicating methods, storage and retrieval methods and procedures, and who have a working knowledge of video forensics and evidentiary procedures.

Recorded media - Audio-video signals recorded or digitally stored on a storage device or portable media.

304.1.2 DEFINITIONS CONTINUED

Taser Camera System - A body worn POV camera system worn by the officer on his head, lapel, or sunglasses. The current model utilized by Aransas Pass Police Department is the Taser Axon Flex.

MAV - Meaning shall also include the Taser Camera System.

304.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Aransas Pass Police Department to use mobile audio and video technology to more effectively fulfill the department's mission and to ensure these systems are used securely and efficiently.

304.2.1 SURREPTITIOUS USE OF THE AUDIO RECORDER

Texas law permits an individual to surreptitiously record any conversation in which one party to the conversation has given his/her permission (Tex. Penal Code § 16.02).

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Members of the Department may surreptitiously record any conversation during the course of a criminal investigation in which the officer reasonably believes that such a recording will be beneficial to the investigation.

Members shall not surreptitiously record another department member without a court order or authorization of the Chief of Police.

304.3 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Prior to going into service, each officer will properly equip him/herself to record audio and video in the field. At the end of the shift, each officer will follow the established procedures for providing to the Department any recordings or used media and any other related equipment. Each officer should have adequate recording media for the entire duty assignment. In the event an officer works at a remote location and reports in only periodically, additional recording media may be issued. Only Aransas Pass Police Department- identified and labeled media with tracking numbers is to be used.

At the start of each shift, officers should test the MAV system's operation in accordance with manufacturer specifications and department operating procedures and training.

System documentation is accomplished by the officer recording his/her name, serial number, badge or PIN number and the current date and time at the start and again at the end of each shift. If the system is malfunctioning, the officer shall take the vehicle out of service unless a supervisor requests the vehicle remain in service.

304.3.1 TASER CAMERA MALFUNCTION

Officers shall test each Taser Camera System at the beginning of their shift and insure that the unit is working properly. Any Taser Camera System found to be malfunctioning shall be removed from inventory and turned into either the MAV Technician or the officer's shift Commander.

304.3.2 ACTIVATION OF THE TASER CAMERA SYSTEM

Activation rules shall remain the same as it pertains to the MAV. However, the Taser Camera System currently does not self-activate. Officers shall activate the Taser Camera System manually before contact with the public is made, before a traffic stop is effected, and upon receipt of a dispatched call. The Taser Camera System shall not be interrupted until the entire event has concluded.

304.4 ACTIVATION OF THE MAV

The MAV system is designed to turn on whenever the unit's emergency lights are activated. The system remains on until it is turned off manually. The audio portion is independently controlled and should be activated manually by the officer whenever appropriate. When audio is being recorded, the video will also record.

304.4.1 REQUIRED ACTIVATION OF MAV

This policy is not intended to describe every possible situation in which the MAV system may be used, although there are many situations where its use is appropriate. An officer may activate the system any time the officer believes its use would be appropriate and/or valuable to document an incident.

In some circumstances it is not possible to capture images of the incident due to conditions or the location of the camera. However, the audio portion can be valuable evidence and

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is subject to the same activation requirements as the MAV. The MAV system should be activated in any of the following situations:

- (a) All field contacts involving actual or potential criminal conduct, within video or audio range:
 - 1. Traffic stops (to include, but not limited to, traffic violations, stranded motorist assistance and all crime interdiction stops)
 - 2. Priority responses
 - 3. Vehicle pursuits
 - 4. Suspicious vehicles
 - 5. Arrests
 - 6. Vehicle searches
 - 7. Physical or verbal confrontations or use of force
 - 8. Pedestrian checks
 - 9. DWI/DUI investigations including field sobriety tests
 - 10. Consensual encounters
 - 11. Crimes in progress
 - 12. Responding to an in-progress call
- (b) All self-initiated activity in which an officer would normally notify Dispatch
- (c) Any call for service involving a crime where the recorder may aid in the apprehension and/or prosecution of a suspect:
 - 1. Family violence calls
 - 2. Disturbance of peace calls
 - 3. Offenses involving violence or weapons
- (d) Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording
- (e) Any other circumstance where the officer believes that a recording of an incident would be appropriate

304.4.2 CESSATION OF RECORDING

Once activated, the MAV system should remain on until the incident has concluded. For purposes of this section, conclusion of an incident has occurred when all arrests have been made, arrestees have been transported and all witnesses and victims have been interviewed.

304.4.3 WHEN ACTIVATION IS NOT REQUIRED

Activation of the MAV system is not required when exchanging information with other officers or during breaks, lunch periods, when not in service or actively on patrol.

No member of this department may surreptitiously record a conversation of any other member of this department except with a court order or when authorized by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee for the purpose of conducting a criminal or administrative investigation.

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304.4.4 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors should determine if vehicles with non-functioning MAV systems should be placed into service. If these vehicles are placed into service, the appropriate documentation should be made, including notification of Dispatch.

At reasonable intervals, supervisors should validate that:

- (a) Beginning and end-of-shift recording procedures are followed.
- (b) Logs reflect the proper chain of custody, including:
 - 1. The tracking number of the MAV system media.
 - 2. The date it was issued.
 - 3. The law enforcement operator or the vehicle to which it was issued.
 - 4. The date it was submitted.
 - 5. Law enforcement operators submitting the media.
 - 6. Holds for evidence indication and tagging as required.
- (c) The operation of MAV systems by new employees is assessed and reviewed no less than biweekly.

When an incident arises that requires the immediate retrieval of the recorded media (e.g., serious crime scenes, officer-involved shootings, department-involved collisions), a supervisor shall respond to the scene and ensure that the appropriate supervisor, MAV technician or crime scene investigator properly retrieves the recorded media. The media may need to be treated as evidence and should be handled in accordance with current evidence procedures for recorded media.

Supervisors may activate the MAV system remotely to monitor a developing situation, such as a chase, riot or an event that may threaten public safety, officer safety or both, when the purpose is to obtain tactical information to assist in managing the event. Supervisors shall not remotely activate the MAV system for the purpose of monitoring the conversations or actions of an officer.

304.5 REVIEW OF MAV RECORDINGS

All recording media, recorded images and audio recordings are the property of the Department. Dissemination outside of the agency is strictly prohibited, except to the extent permitted or required by law.

To prevent damage to, or alteration of, the original recorded media, it shall not be copied, viewed or otherwise inserted into any device not approved by the department MAV technician or forensic media staff. When reasonably possible, a copy of the original media shall be used for viewing (unless otherwise directed by the courts) to preserve the original media.

Recordings may be reviewed in any of the following situations:

- (a) For use when preparing reports or statements
- (b) By a supervisor investigating a specific act of officer conduct
- (c) By a supervisor to assess officer performance
- (d) To assess proper functioning of MAV systems
- (e) By a department investigator who is participating in an official investigation, such as a personnel complaint, administrative inquiry or a criminal investigation

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- (f) By department personnel who request to review recordings.
- (g) By an officer who is captured on or referenced in the video or audio data and reviews and uses such data for any purpose relating to his/her employment
- (h) By court personnel through proper process or with permission of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee
- (i) By the media through proper process or with permission of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee or in compliance with a Public Records Act request
- (j) To assess possible training value
- (k) Recordings may be shown for training purposes. If an involved officer objects to showing a recording, staff will determine if the training value outweighs the officer's objection.
- (l) By a supervisor during periodic reviews for compliance with racial profiling laws (Tex. Code of Crim. Pro. art. 2.132(d))

Employees desiring to view any previously uploaded or archived MAV recording should submit a request in writing to the Shift Commander. Approved requests should be forwarded to the MAV technician for processing.

In no event shall any recording be used or shown for the purpose of intentionally ridiculing or embarrassing any employee.

304.6 DOCUMENTING MAV USE

If any incident is recorded with either the video or audio system, the existence of that recording shall be documented in the officer's report. If a citation is issued, the officer shall make a notation on the back of the records copy of the citation indicating that the incident was recorded.

304.7 RECORDING MEDIA STORAGE AND INTEGRITY

Once submitted for storage, all recording media will be labeled and stored in a designated secure area. All recording media that is not booked as evidence will be retained as required by the established records retention schedule.

304.7.1 COPIES OF ORIGINAL RECORDING MEDIA

Original recording media shall not be used for any purpose other than for initial review by a supervisor. Upon proper request, a copy of the original recording media will be made for use as authorized in this policy.

Original recording media may only be released in response to a court order or upon approval by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. In the event that an original recording is released to a court, a copy shall be made and placed in storage until the original is returned.

304.7.2 MAV RECORDINGS AS EVIDENCE

Officers who reasonably believe that a MAV recording is likely to contain evidence relevant to a criminal offense, potential claim against the officer, or against the Aransas Pass Police Department should indicate this in an appropriate report. Officers should ensure relevant recordings are preserved.

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304.7.3 REQUESTING MAV VIDEO FOR CASE

Anytime an incident has been recorded and the video and audio will be needed for criminal prosecution, the officer responsible for his/her own video shall file an email report to the MAV Technician / Video Evidence Manager so that the video can be assigned to the appropriate case, downloaded for preservation, and ultimately forwarded to the appropriate prosecutor's office. This email report shall be completed by the end of the officers regularly assigned shift.

304.8 CUSTODIAN OF VIDEO EVIDENCE

The video custodian of video evidence shall be designated by the chief of police or his designee. The custodian of video evidence shall maintain a log of all video evidence. The log may be written or in the form of digital media. Only the custodian of video evidence shall compile video evidence for attachment to case records. Any officer within the department may request that a video evidence be attached to a case record.

304.9 SYSTEM OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

- (a) MAV system vehicle installations should be based on officer safety requirements and the vehicle and device manufacturer's recommendations.
- (b) The MAV system should be configured to minimally record for 30 seconds prior to an event.
- (c) The MAV system may not be configured to record audio data occurring prior to activation.
- (d) Unless the transmitters being used are designed for synchronized use, only one transmitter, usually the primary initiating officer's transmitter, should be activated at a scene to minimize interference or noise from other MAV transmitters.
- (e) Officers using digital transmitters that are synchronized to their individual MAV shall activate both audio and video recordings when responding in a support capacity. This is to obtain additional perspectives of the incident scene.
- (f) With the exception of law enforcement radios or other emergency equipment, other electronic devices should not be used inside MAV-equipped law enforcement vehicles to minimize the possibility of causing electronic or noise interference with the MAV system.
- (g) Officers shall not erase, alter, reuse, modify or tamper with MAV recordings. Only a supervisor, MAV technician or other authorized designee may erase and reissue previous recordings and may only do so pursuant to the provisions of this policy.
- (h) To prevent damage, original recordings shall not be viewed on any equipment other than the equipment issued or authorized by the MAV technician.

304.10 MAV TECHNICIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

The MAV technician is responsible for:

- (a) Ordering, issuing, retrieving, storing, erasing and duplicating of all recorded media.
- (b) Collecting all completed media for oversight and verification of wireless downloaded media. Once collected, the MAV technician:
 - 1. Ensures it is stored in a secure location with authorized controlled access.
 - 2. Makes the appropriate entries in the chain of custody log.
- (c) Erasing of media:

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1. Pursuant to a court order.
 2. In accordance with established records retention policies, including reissuing all other media deemed to be of no evidentiary value.
- (d) Assigning all media an identification number prior to issuance to the field:
1. Maintaining a record of issued media.
- (e) Ensuring that an adequate supply of recording media is available.
- (f) Managing the long-term storage of media that has been deemed to be of evidentiary value in accordance with the department evidence storage protocols and the records retention schedule.

304.11 TRAINING

All members who are authorized to use the MAV system shall successfully complete an approved course of instruction prior to its use.