



# FORT WORTH POLICE DEPARTMENT



## SPECIAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER: 506.04  
SUBJECT: Digital Recording Device

General Order 506.04, Officer-Worn Digital Recording Device, is a new order which addresses the emerging technology of officer-worn digital recording devices. These recordings can be useful for the documentation of evidence, preparation of offense reports, and future court testimony. These recordings may also be used to protect officers from false allegations of misconduct as well as provide training material for incident debriefing or performance evaluations. The provisions of this order are effective immediately.

### **506.04 OFFICER-WORN DIGITAL RECORDING DEVICES**

- A. The guidelines in this order apply to all officer-worn digital recording devices regardless of whether the device is owned by the department or personally-owned by the officer. These procedures do not apply to the use of in-car audio/video recording systems that are permanently mounted in a vehicle.
- B. All digital multimedia evidence (DME) that are captured during the scope of an officer's duties are property of the Fort Worth Police Department and are subject to policies regarding viewing, release, retention and destruction. DME shall not be converted for personal use. Accessing, copying, editing or releasing recordings or depictions of recordings without proper approval is strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary actions.
- C. The use of digital recording device by any officer is voluntary; however, if an officer elects to accept a digital recording device then the officer is required to use the device as outlined in this order. Officers utilizing a digital recording device shall use sound judgment and adhere to the following prohibitions:
  - 1. Officers shall not intentionally create digital recordings of other employees in areas where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists such as locker rooms, restrooms, etc.
  - 2. Officers shall not knowingly record undercover officers or confidential informants.
  - 3. Officers shall not use a departmentally-owned officer-worn digital recording device to record any type of personal activities.
  - 4. Officer shall not allow non-sworn personnel to view the DME without permission from the officer's immediate supervisor. Governmental employees who are directly involved in the investigation and/or prosecution of a criminal case related to the DME or who work in Internal Affairs are exempted from this provision.
  - 5. Any uploading or converting digital recordings for use on any type of social media is strictly prohibited.
  - 6. Officers may only use the recording device while in patient care areas of a hospital when the recording is for official police business such as a criminal investigation i.e., dying declarations, Horizontal-Gaze-Nystagmus (HGN) on injured drivers, etc.
  - 7. Only the authorized digital recording brands approved by the Chief of Police shall be utilized.
- D. Officers deploying a departmentally-owned officer-worn digital recording device shall attend department approved training on the device, review the standard operating procedures governing use of the device and demonstrate a working knowledge of the device prior to employing the device in field operations.
  - 1. Officers deploying a personal digital recording device shall demonstrate proficiency in the use of the device and retrieval of the recordings.
  - 2. Supervisors of officers deploying a departmentally-owned officer-worn digital recording device shall attend training regarding the device to be worn as well as the procedures for storing and retention of the DME.
- E. Officers shall inspect the digital recording device prior to each shift to confirm proper operation, including sufficient battery life. Any problem with the digital recording device shall be reported to the officer's supervisor immediately and the supervisor will contact Training to secure a replacement or repair.
- F. Officers deploying a digital recording device should ensure the device is activated during potential enforcement activities and that the device continues to record until the incident is completed, the officer has left the scene, or the citizen contact is complete.

- G. When an incident has been recorded and an offense/incident report is generated, the officer shall note in the report in the first sentence of the officers' narrative after the name, identification number, date and time, that the incident or a portion of the incident was captured by a digital recording system. All records shall be downloaded from the device by the end of duty. Recordings captured during the scope of an officer's duties may be subject to release under applicable federal and state laws
1. DME will be maintained on the approved storage location, server, website, or other location authorized by the department.
  2. DME will be kept at a minimum of 180 days for administrative cases and a minimum of two (2) years for use of force recordings. All DME will be kept in accordance with state retention guidelines.
  3. If a use of force and/or vehicle pursuit is captured on a digital recording device, one (1) copy shall be reduced to portable media and forwarded to the involved officer's chain of command for administrative review.
- H. Recordings may be shown for training purposes upon completion of a criminal case if all involved officers depicted in the recording approve. If an officer objects to the recording being used for training purposes, the objection will be submitted in writing to their deputy chief to determine whether the training value outweighs the objection.

NOVEMBER 26, 2012  
Date of Approval

Jeffrey W. Halstead  
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Chief of Police