



**CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**



In-Car Video System

Eff. Date 12/04/2025

Purpose

The utilization of the Madison Police Department's (MPD) in-car video system can provide accurate documentation of events, actions, conditions, and statements made during law enforcement contacts. The use of the in-car video system shall be limited to trained employees and be in accordance with MPD procedures and applicable laws. All video files recorded by MPD in-car video systems are official police records which are subject to Wisconsin Open Records laws. Officers are required to select the appropriate Classification Tag and to enter the corresponding case number (or their pd+initials when applicable) in the Case File Number field of the video recording tagging window for each video file they generate during the course of their work shifts.

For the purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), the term "officer" means any MPD commissioned employee who has been trained in the use of the in-car video system installed in MPD vehicles.

Procedure

USE AND CARE OF IN-CAR VIDEO EQUIPMENT

1. Officers shall be responsible for the proper care and operation of their individually assigned wireless microphone, charging dock, and optional lapel microphone. Microphones shall be properly charged prior to the start of each shift.
2. Officers shall not remove, dismantle, or tamper with in-car video (ICV) equipment and/or microphone(s).
3. At the beginning of each shift or assignment, officers operating a squad equipped with an ICV shall complete the following procedures:
 - a. Log into the ICV application.
 - b. Confirm that the correct date, time, and live video display appear in the ICV application.
 - c. Officers shall synchronize and wear the synchronized wireless microphone (and optional lapel microphone) in a position where it can effectively record audio throughout the duration of the officer's shift. In the event two officers are assigned to a single squad (i.e. Field Training, Special Events), one officer is required to synchronize that officer's wireless microphone to the ICV system of the shared squad.
 - d. Perform a short test to confirm video and audio recording.
4. Officers shall be logged into the ICV application throughout the duration of the shift or assignment. In the event of unexpected application closures or laptop restarts, officers shall log back into the ICV application as soon as practical.
5. If an officer is required to respond to a call prior to being able to complete the steps listed above then the above should be completed at the first available opportunity.
6. Officers who are operating a squad in a non-operational capacity (for example, when using a squad for training, shuttling squads between districts, or shuttling squads to/from Fleet Services) where they are not logging into Mobile/Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) are not required to utilize the in-car video system.
7. When problems with the in-car video system are identified, officers are required to report the issue to Information Management and Technology (IMAT) by calling the IMAT support line Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm at 608-261-9655 or by sending an email containing the vehicle number and description of the problem to the IMAT support email address, imat@cityofmadison.com. If the identified problem could impact subsequent officers' ability to use a particular squad, officers are encouraged to note the squad number and its identified problem on the appropriate Police District vehicle dry erase marker board.

Officers may operate squads with non-functional in-car video systems when no other squad is reasonably available.

OPERATION OF THE IN-CAR VIDEO SYSTEM

1. The in-car video system is set to automatically start video recordings (including a 30-second video only pre-event) when any of the following actions occur or thresholds are exceeded:
 - a. The squad's emergency lights are activated.
 - b. The wireless microphone's record (REC) button or auxiliary (AUX) button is depressed.
 - c. The record button is depressed on the back of the front camera.
 - d. The record button is selected in the in-car video software on the Mobile Data Computer (MDC).
 - e. The vehicle crash sensor is triggered.
 - f. The vehicle speed trigger threshold has been exceeded (80mph).
2. In-car video equipment shall be used to record the following:
 - a. All emergency vehicle operations.
 - b. All traffic stops.
 - c. All transports of persons either in or out of custody.
 - d. All interviews as required by Wisconsin State Statutes when other established recording facilities are not available, practical, or preferred.
 - e. When an officer attempts to place an individual into physical custody (either criminal or protective) when safe to do so.
 - f. When approaching an individual the officer reasonably anticipates may be taken into custody when safe to do so.
3. In-car video equipment may also be utilized to record any other official police contacts or actions beyond those listed in point #2 above.
4. Officers should make reasonable efforts to position the front squad camera to accurately capture events outlined in #2 above, unless circumstances dictate a different squad positioning for officer safety purposes.
5. Once initiated, video and audio recordings should remain activated until the incident or event has concluded or until deactivation is permissible. The conclusion of an incident or event has occurred when any arrest(s) related to the incident have been made and arrestee(s) have been transported, after a stopped motor vehicle driver is released from a traffic stop, or when no further law enforcement action is likely to occur related to the incident or event. Deactivation of video and audio recordings prior to the conclusion of the incident or event is permissible:
 - a. When an officer is not directly involved in activity related to the incident or event (i.e., blocking traffic at a position not near the scene of an incident); officers not directly involved in the incident or event do not need to complete a report if the purpose is to just document the cessation of their recording;
 - b. When an officer reasonably believes there is no evidentiary value in collecting further video and audio; for transparency purposes, officers shall document in a report or in call notes the assessment for the cessation of any recording.
6. Officers may temporarily mute audio recording of conversations between police personnel for administrative reasons including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Employee to employee training (e.g., during Field Training, incident debriefings, etc.);
 - b. Officer to supervisor discussions about incident dispositions and/or charging decisions;
 - c. Employee to employee discussions involving response strategy or tactics; or
 - d. Personal conversations unrelated to the incident or event being investigated.
7. Reasons for any **intentional** interruptions/microphone muting during video recordings shall be audibly noted prior to the muting and documented within official reports, narrative sections of citations, or in call notes. After the purpose of a temporary mute of an audio recording has concluded, officers shall reactivate the audio recording.
8. Upon completion of a recording, **the officer shall select the applicable classification tag** from the available menu options listed in the "Classify Tag" field of the recording window. Officers shall not intentionally close the recording window on the MDC without making a selection from the classification choices. The current classification tag options include the following: Non-Evidence,

Equipment Check, Traffic Stop, Arrest/Transport, OWI, Evidence (default tag), and Crash/Pursuit. In the event of multiple, successive recordings that result in multiple files to classify and tag, officers shall locate and add tagging information to the untagged files when they can safely do so, but prior to the conclusion of their work day. Exceptions to this shall be approved by the OIC or other supervisor. Officers can locate these files in the Archive area of the Arbitrator program on their MDC prior to the files being uploaded to the server or they can sign into the Back End client on a district workstation.

9. **Officers shall ensure that the “Classify Tag” and “Case File Number” fields of the recording window are filled out properly for each recording.** If there is no case number associated with the recording, officers shall type their respective pd+initials in the Case File Field. Officers may enter any additional information (e.g., license plate, name, suspect information, etc.) deemed pertinent to the investigation in the “Note” field. The classification tag, case file number, and additional information entered by the officer will serve as the initial selection for the duration of video retention of each video recording.
10. Officers are only responsible for tagging the videos that are created when signed into arbitrator during their assigned shifts.

VIDEO TRANSFER AND DOCUMENTATION

1. Video recording(s) shall be transferred at least once during the course of each work shift or assignment. Exceptions to this must be approved by the OIC or other supervisor. Transfer of video may be accomplished by wireless transfer at MPD district stations or other identified wireless access points. Officers can check the status of video files in the Archive area of the Arbitrator program on their MDC or they can sign into Genetec Clearance on a district workstation to confirm upload.
2. Officers should make every attempt to transfer video recording(s) deemed to be evidence prior to the end of their shift. If this process requires the employee to be on overtime, the employee shall obtain prior approval for the overtime from a supervisor or from the OIC. If the video does not transfer, contact IMAT through the support line Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm at 608-261-9655 or send an email containing the vehicle number and description of the problem to the IMAT support email address, imat@cityofmadison.com prior to the end of the employee's shift.

IN-CAR VIDEO MANAGEMENT

1. Evidentiary recordings submitted by officers will be maintained on a secure server within the City of Madison computer network until the case has been adjudicated and/or in accordance with existing MPD policies and procedures for the handling and disposition of evidence. Evidentiary images of recordings may not be duplicated without supervisory authorization.
2. Recordings will be maintained based upon the retention schedule designated for each classification tag.
3. Designated members of the Forensic Services Unit (FSU) and IMAT will be responsible for system administration of recordings.
4. Video recordings may be placed on an administrative hold, preventing their disposal by:
 - a. The Chief of Police or designee.
 - b. Professional Standards and Internal Affairs Lieutenant.
 - c. A Command Officer.Any later removal of this hold must be submitted in writing to FSU.
5. If upon receipt of a complaint concerning the conduct of an officer or other employee, the supervisor receiving the complaint determines that the event in question has been recorded, that information shall be forwarded to the District Command Officer, and the Professional Standards and Internal Affairs Lieutenant outlining the details of the complaint.

Tag / Retention	Definition/Use Case
Non-Evidence (180 days)	Not categorized by any other tag
Evidence (30 years) – Default Tag	All other evidence
Equipment Check (7 days)	Lightbar checks at the start of a shift
Crash/Pursuit (30 years)	Squad crashes and vehicular pursuits
OWI (30 years)	OWI incidents
Traffic Stop (180 days)	Standard traffic stops
Arrest/Transport (30 years)	Transporting arrestees to Jail, JRC, Detox, etc.

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