

“Keep Orlando a safe city by reducing crime and maintaining livable neighborhoods.”

**ORLANDO POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE
1902. 5, FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHY, DIGITAL CAMERAS,
AND DIGITAL IMAGING ARCHIVE**

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POLICY:

This directive is intended to provide information about the Forensic Imaging Lab and the duties and services of the Forensic Photographer. It also provides direction regarding the use of issued digital cameras, the handling of digital media, and digital archiving.

With the ongoing development of technology and the availability of personally-owned recording devices, smart phones, tablets, etc., all employees shall acknowledge that this policy shall apply to the capture, handling and archiving of all digital evidence, even if such evidence is collected on an employee's personal device. This may include, but is not limited to, incidents where certain evidence may be irretrievably altered or lost prior to the arrival of a supervisor, corporal or CSI.

This may also include circumstances where fire department officials, public works personnel and/or any wrecker service have responded and the nature of their lawful duties directly creates a danger for certain evidence remaining intact. Further examples would include situations where rapidly-changing weather conditions jeopardize the position or structure of the evidence being documented.

PROCEDURES:

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHY

Forensic Photography is the provision of general and forensic photographic services, including photography of evidence, for use in investigations. The end product is generally used for potential or actual courtroom presentation.

1.2 FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHER

The Forensic Photographer provides general and technical photographic services for the Orlando Police Department. The Forensic Photographer is responsible for specialized forensic photography of evidence as well as processing and printing digital images captured by officers, Community Service Officers (CSOs) and Crime Scene Investigators (CSIs). The Forensic Photographer maintains photo processing/printing equipment (DL600 Digital Dry Lab), server-based forensic image management systems, and departmental negative files. The Forensic Photographer also performs some public-relations photography and assists the Forensic Video Analyst as needed. Ultimately, work is viewed by investigators, crime lab experts, attorneys and jurors who rely on photography to determine the outcome of the investigation. The Forensic Photographer works in the Technology and Forensics Unit (TFU) under the supervision of the sworn TFU Supervisor.

2. USE OF DIGITAL CAMERA

The following are guidelines for the use of a digital camera. Do not use the digital camera to record footwear impressions, latent prints, injuries that will be compared to an object alleged to have caused the injury, or tool/tire impressions. Each of these types of evidence requires the use of a scale for future scientific comparison. Photographs to be used for the purpose of scientific comparison will be taken by a CSI or Forensic Photographer. (35.03b)

2.1 INJURIES

The digital camera is used to photograph minor injuries discovered while investigating battery, domestic violence, criminal mischief, hate crime, gang graffiti, and response to resistance cases. The digital camera is not intended to be used to photograph major crime scenes or significant injuries or in other cases that traditionally fall within the responsibility of the CSIs. (35.03c)

2.2 FIRs

The digital camera may be used to document relatively minor situations including FIRs. Images taken for FIRs may be handled in accordance with the current issue of P&P 1111, Field Interview Reports (FIRs) and Photographs.

2.3 AGENCY VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

The digital camera may be used to photograph minor City vehicle accidents that do not involve injuries. (35.03c)

2.4 VERIFICATION OF ORIGINAL

Personnel who capture the original image, or were present at the time the original image was captured, can verify that the image is a true and accurate representation. The basic premise of evidentiary photography requires the photographer to be able to testify that the photo accurately represents what he or she observed and that it has not changed.

2.5 CUSTODY

Upon the capture of an image to the time of download on the specified download terminal, the images are in the custody of the personnel who captured the original image. Once images are downloaded through the specified download terminal, they are in the custody and control of the Forensic Imaging Lab, which is staffed by the Forensic Photographer(s).

2.6 CAMERA/CARD SECURITY AND HANDLING

Do not set a camera/card down or leave unattended in an unsecured area. Remember, the images on the card are evidence and should be treated as such. Good security practices provide the foundation for the chain of custody and ensure the integrity of the evidence. By preventing unauthorized access, and by eliminating any perception that unauthorized access may have occurred, you reduce any accusations of tampering. Employees shall not share evidentiary images, audio or video with any person who does not have a direct police investigative or administrative purpose for being granted access.

2.7 TYPE OF CAMERA TO USE

If a supervisor (or ASL/Corporal), once on scene, is uncertain as to how to best capture the desired image(s), he or she can contact an on-duty CSI for guidance. **Use of digital cameras (this includes cellular phone cameras) less than 3.1 megapixels or 2048 pixels x 1536 pixels is prohibited for evidence gathering** unless no other device is available. Image resolution lower than 3.1 megapixels or 2048 pixels x 1536 pixels will not meet acceptable practices for courtroom proceedings.

2.8 SCALES

Photos of injuries should be taken both with and without a scale. When taking other types of photos, use of the scale is at the discretion of the photographer (scales can be obtained from any CSI).

3. PROCEDURES FOR CAPTURED IMAGES

When an image is captured it should be previewed to judge the quality. If the quality of the image is not sufficient (i.e., too dark, too light, or blurred), adjust for the problem and recapture another image. **DO NOT DELETE THE ORIGINAL IMAGE.** If an accurate representative image cannot be captured through the use of your issued digital camera, a CSI will be called out.

Images are to be captured directly to the dedicated storage media (secure disk [SD] media card, compact flash [CF] media card, memory stick, etc.) within your digital camera. **Do not transfer images or copy images to another source as this damages the integrity of the original image.** Case photographs are not to be transferred or downloaded to any Technology Management computer.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RENAME FILES TAKEN WITH YOUR DIGITAL CAMERA

4. DIGITAL IMAGING ARCHIVE

4.1 SPECIFIED DOWNLOAD PROGRAM

Digital images pertaining to casework must be downloaded through the Digital Imaging Archive's specified software. Use of any other download software, including Windows Explorer, is strictly prohibited (some exclusions apply to the Digital Forensic Lab and Forensic Imaging Lab). The Digital Imaging Archive computer is currently located at the Crime Scene Facility (Technology and Forensics) lobby. Personnel wishing to download images must contact a Forensic Photographer to set up a user account/password.

4.2 DOWNLOAD COMPUTERS

Use of any computer other than the assigned Digital Imaging Archive download computers for image downloading is strictly prohibited. Images that cannot be downloaded through the system must be turned in to the Forensic Imaging Lab for direct download onto the workstation computer. Media cards can be left in a CSI locker; however, the Forensic Photograph personnel must be emailed advising it's location. The email address for the Forensic Photograph unit is opdphotonlab@orlando.gov. A Forensic Imaging Lab Photo Request Order (Attachment A) must be turned in with the media card.

4.3 SECURITY PROCEDURES

The Digital Imaging Archive is a secure terminal that will only be used to download digital images pertaining to casework. This terminal does not have network access, internet, email, gaming or audio components. Use of this computer for any function other than digital downloads (games, music, Microsoft Word, etc.) is strictly prohibited. Personnel using this terminal for any other functions will be subject to disciplinary action.

4.4 LEVELS OF ACCESS

Forensic Photographers, Forensic Video Analysts, CSIs, detectives and officers will have access to this terminal by password. All attempts to log in to the system are tracked and stored. All photographic image access is tracked and stored with the case file on the image server. If requested, a list of personnel who have viewed or ordered services is available.

4.5 USER INFORMATION

All user information is stored with the original case images. This includes, but is not limited to: date and time of download, personnel downloading images, number of photographs, and camera settings (mode, flash settings, lens shutter speed, aperture, ISO, auto focus/manual focus, etc.)

4.6 TIMEFRAME

Downloading of images must be completed before the end of the employee's tour of duty, unless the immediate supervisor approves a delay. Any delay in downloading may result in delayed printing and can lead to questions concerning the integrity of the evidentiary chain of custody.

4.7 DELETION AND REFORMATTING

No images will be deleted from the media card before they are downloaded and archived to the image file server. After all images have been successfully downloaded, the files may be deleted from the media card through the camera menu. The use of any Windows programs such as Explorer for the deletion of digital images is forbidden. Reformat your memory card monthly as part of routine maintenance to ensure the accurate functionality of the memory cards.

Evidentiary photographic images, audio or video captured on any employee's personally-owned device, once downloaded, shall also be deleted from the personally-owned device as well as any other shared-storage locations not authorized by policy prior to the end of the employee's tour of duty unless the immediate supervisor approves a delay.

Deletions shall be documented in the appropriate report as follows: "The photographic image/audio file/video file was successfully downloaded to the Digital Imaging Archive and removed from [name of device] by [employee name/identification number]." If supervisory authorization was granted to download to another platform, also state the location of that platform, the reason, and the supervisor's name and identification number. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this policy.

4.8 PRODUCTION OF PRINTS AND OTHER SERVICES

Prints and other services will be processed as requested. Requests may be submitted electronically through the Digital Imaging Archive download computer or by completion of the Forensic Imaging Lab Photo Request Order. The Lab Photo Request can be emailed to opdphotolab@orlando.gov. Clearly list all individuals that will receive prints as this information is logged with the case file for tracking purposes.

4.9 FIRs

When images have been captured for FIR purposes, make a notation on the FIR that the image has been taken, and then download the image using the normal procedure.

5. CARE AND STORAGE

If equipment is lost, damaged or otherwise inoperable, inform the Forensic Imaging Lab immediately. Digital cameras are susceptible to damage if the proper care is not taken. Cameras should be used and cared for in an appropriate manner. Equipment should be treated as a portable computer. Avoid any impact with the camera or camera case. Do not get the camera wet. Avoid exposure to temperature extremes. If the equipment becomes cold enough that the lens fogs and condensation forms, open the battery compartment, remove the batteries, and leave the compartment door open. Wait until the lens fogging disappears before attempting to use the camera. Once the lens is clear, wipe the camera with a clean cloth to ensure that it is dry, and then install fresh batteries.

6. TRAINING

In addition to the instruction manual provided by the manufacturer, additional training will be provided to sergeants, ASLs, corporals, and other personnel as directed by the Technology and Forensics Unit supervisor by appointment, through the Forensic Imaging Lab. Each training session will take approximately 30 minutes, and will be documented through the use of Department in-service training forms. (14.06, 14.07) Lesson plans for this block of instruction will be maintained in the Forensic Imaging Lab. (14.03)

The sergeants, ASLs and corporals are expected to train their squad members in the use of the digital camera. This will allow the officer writing a report to capture the images that pertain to his or her case, thus reducing the number of individuals required to testify in court. Members are encouraged to practice with the cameras to gain familiarity with the equipment and confidence in its use. Members shall read the instruction manual to reinforce the basic training.

7. MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

All equipment shall be maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications and recommendations as contained within the operations manual. When a piece of equipment falls outside these specifications and recommendations the equipment will be taken out of service until it has been corrected. Any functionality or serviceability problems should be reported to the Forensic Imaging Lab immediately. A division commander and Fiscal Management administrator will determine the appropriate funds to be utilized for the maintenance/repair of this equipment. All receipts will be returned to Fiscal Management as soon as possible.

1902.5 P&P 8/2017

ATTACHMENT A

**ORLANDO POLICE DEPARTMENT
FORENSIC IMAGING LAB
PHOTO REQUEST ORDER**

Emergency <input type="checkbox"/>	Job Order Number:	Case Number :
Non-Emergency <input type="checkbox"/>		Evidence Number:
Incident Type / Offense:		Incident Location:
Requested By:		Employee #:
Deliver To:		Unit/Section:
Date Requested:		Date Needed:
EXPLANATION OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED		
Note: All digital media will be returned to you. If this digital media needs to be submitted into Property & Evidence AS AN ORIGINAL, please note your contact information below so the Forensic Photographer can contact you for pick-up. All other digital media will be returned via interoffice mail.		
Digital Media Submitted <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Best contact method: <input type="checkbox"/> Via City email <input type="checkbox"/> Via Phone Phone #: _____
Printing	Quantity	Additional Information:
File		
Proof		
Copy		
4 x 6		
5 x 7		
8 x 10		
11 x 14		
16 x 20		
20 x 24		

PHOTO LAB USE ONLY

Film Used	C	Lab Only	C	Paper Used	C	Other
	B&W		B&W		B&W	
Photographer:						
Authorized By:					Date:	
Forensic Photographer's Signature:					Date:	
Forensic Photographer's Signature:					Date:	