



# GENERAL ORDER

## TWO RIVERS POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **VEHICLE AUDIO/VIDEO  
RECORDING EQUIPMENT**

SCOPE: All Sworn Personnel  
DISTRIBUTION: General Orders Manual

REFERENCE:

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This General Order cancels and supersedes any and all written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

By Order of:

Brian W. Kohlmeier  
Chief of Police

INDEX AS: In-car Cameras  
Vehicle Audio/Video Recording Equipment  
Mobile Audio/Video Recording System (MAVRS)

PURPOSE: The purpose of this General Order is to provide members of the Two Rivers Police Department with guidelines for the use, management, storage, and retrieval of audio-visual media recorded by in-car video systems.

This General Order consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. DEFINITIONS
- III. PROCEDURES
- IV. LIMITATIONS

## **I. POLICY**

- A. The use of an MAVRS provides persuasive documentary evidence and helps defend against civil litigation and allegations of officer misconduct. It is the policy of the Two Rivers Police Department that officers assigned the use of these devices shall adhere to the operational objectives and protocols outlined herein so as to maximize the effectiveness and utility of the MAVRS and the integrity of evidence and related video documentation.**

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. RECORDED MEDIA:** Refers to audio-video signals recorded on any of several storage devices, including, but not limited to, analog tape (VHS, SVHS, Hi 8mm), digital tape (DV), or other portable digital storage devices (CD, DVD, hard drive, etc.)
- B. IN-CAR CAMERA SYSTEM AND MOBILE AUDIO VIDEO RECORDER SYSTEM (MAVRS):** These are synonymous terms and refer to any system that captures audio and video signals capable of installation in a vehicle, and that includes a camera, microphone, recorder, and monitor.
- C. MAVRS TECHNICIAN:** Personnel trained in the operational use and repair of MAVRS, duplicating methods, storage and retrieval methods and procedures, and who possess a working knowledge of video forensics and evidentiary procedures.
- D. DEGAUSSING:** Electronic cleansing of analog recording media that returns the media to its original state ready for the imprinting of new images.
- E. DISPOSAL:** The physical act of throwing away of the physical media containing audio or video recordings. Media containing audio or video may only be disposed after the physical media has been thoroughly degaussed or physically destroyed.

## **III. PROCEDURES**

### **A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The Department has adopted the use of MAVRS to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To enhance officer safety.
2. To accurately capture statements and events during the course of an incident.
3. To enhance the officer's ability to document and review statements and

actions for both internal reporting requirements and for courtroom preparation/presentation.

4. To provide an impartial measurement for self-critique and field evaluation during recruitment and new officer training.
5. The enhancement of the Department's ability to review arrests, procedures, officer/suspect interaction, and evidence for investigative purposes.
6. To capture visual and audio information for use in current and future investigations.
7. Protect officers from false allegations of improper police conduct.
  - a) Obstructing an Officer or False Complaints of Police Misconduct.

Under s. 973.06 (1) (av) the costs, fees, and surcharges taxable against the defendant shall consist of the following items and no others if a defendant violates s. 946.41 by obstructing an officer; the reasonable costs expended by a state or local law enforcement agency or emergency response agency to respond to or investigate the false information that the defendant provided or the physical evidence that the defendant placed. Costs allowable under this paragraph may include personnel costs and costs associated with the use of police or emergency response vehicles. Furthermore, making false complaints of police misconduct are prohibited under s. 946.66 (2).

## B. GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Department to ensure that the audio-video recording equipment is properly installed according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
  - a) MAVRS equipment shall automatically activate when emergency equipment (lights) or a wireless transmitter is operating. The system may also be activated manually from the control panel affixed to the interior of the vehicle and from the wireless transmitter.
  - b) Placement and operation of system components within the vehicle shall be based on officer safety requirements.
  - c) All officers shall receive training for the proper use of the MAVRS prior to using any of this equipment.
  - d) Should new technology or upgrades be implemented with this equipment, officers shall receive additional training prior to using the equipment.

## C. OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Inspection and general maintenance of MAVRS equipment installed in Departmental vehicles shall be the responsibility of the officer assigned to the vehicle.
  - a) MAVRS equipment shall be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended guidelines and Departmental training and policies.
  - b) Prior to beginning each shift, the assigned officer shall perform an inspection to ensure that the MAVRS is performing in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations covering the following matters:
    - (1) Remote Audio Transmitter:
      - Adequate power source
      - Connected to the recording equipment
      - Remote activation of system via transmitter
    - (2) Camera Lens:
      - Windshield and camera lens free of debris
      - Camera facing intended direction
    - (3) Recording mechanism capturing both audio and video information:
      - System plays back both audio and video tracks.
    - (4) Storage left on DVR should be greater than 10 GB. If less than 10 GB is available, the supervisor shall be notified.
2. Malfunctions, damage or theft of in-car camera equipment shall be reported to the immediate supervisor prior to placing the unit into service.
  - a) A subsequent written report shall include information on the suspected cause(s) of equipment failure, as available, and any recommendations for corrective action.
  - b) The supervisor shall determine if the unit shall be placed in service.

## D. MANDATORY RECORDING

1. Officers shall make every effort to record using the MAVRS when involved in, but not limited to, the following types of incidents:
  - a) Traffic stops (Disabled vehicles, traffic stops and crime interdiction stops).
  - b) Priority responses.

- c) OWI investigations.
- d) Vehicle pursuits.
- e) Crimes in progress.
- f) Transportation of any prisoner(s) or citizen(s).
- g) Formal citizen complaints.
- h) Any situation or incident that the officer, through training and experience, believes should be audibly and visibly recorded.

## E. OPERATIONAL PROTOCOLS

1. All officers shall log into the MAVRS of their patrol vehicle at the start of their shift or as soon as practical thereafter. Temporary short term use of vehicles shall not apply such as transporting a vehicle for repair.
2. Officers using the digital transmitters that are individually synchronized to their individual MAVRS shall activate both audio and video recordings when responding in a support capacity in order to obtain additional perspectives of the incident scene.
3. When the MAVRS is activated, officers shall ensure that the audio portion is also activated so all events are properly documented. Officers are encouraged to narrate events using the audio recording, so as to provide the best documentation for pretrial and courtroom presentation.
4. Officers may use media captured via the MAVRS to assist with an investigation and when preparing written reports of events to help ensure accuracy and consistency of accounts, particularly in incidents that involve an officer's use of force.
5. With the exception of police radios, officers shall ensure that the volume from other electronic devices within the police vehicle does not interfere with MAVRS recordings.
6. Officers shall not erase, alter, reuse, modify or tamper with MAVRS recordings.
7. To prevent damage, original recordings shall not be viewed on any equipment other than the equipment issued or authorized by the MAVRS manufacturer.
8. MAVRS recordings shall be noted on all incident reports when there is a recording(s) of any of the following:
  - a) Arrests.

- b) Assaults.
  - c) Physical or verbal confrontations.
  - d) Vehicle pursuits.
  - e) Vehicle searches in which contraband is recovered.
  - f) Driving while intoxicated or under the influence or impaired arrests.
  - g) All prisoner transports.
9. When the MAVRS is activated to document an event, it shall not be deactivated until the event has been concluded unless:
- a) The incident or event is of such duration that the MAVRS may be deactivated to conserve recording times; **and**
  - b) The officer does not reasonably believe that deactivation will result in the loss of critical documentary information; **and**
  - c) The intention to stop the recording has been noted by the officer either verbally or in a written notation.

#### F. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Shift Supervisors who are informed or otherwise become aware of malfunctioning equipment shall ensure that authorized personnel make repairs in a timely manner.
- 2. Supervisors shall conduct periodic reviews of officer assigned media in order to periodically:
  - a) Assess officer performance;
  - b) Assure proper functioning of MAVRS equipment;
  - c) Identify recordings that may be appropriate for training.
- 3. Supervisors should conduct periodic reviews of personnel who are assigned MAVRS equipment in order to ensure compliance with Department General Orders.
- 4. Minor General Order infractions (not criminal in nature or major General Order violations) discovered during the routine review of recorded material should be viewed as training opportunities and not as routine disciplinary actions. Should the behavior or action become habitual after being informally addressed, the appropriate disciplinary or corrective action shall be taken.

## **G. TECHNICIAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. A designated officer or other employee (MAVRS technician) shall be responsible for the ordering, issuance, retrieval, storage, cleansing (degaussing), and duplication of all recorded media and related equipment.
2. The MAVRS technician shall be responsible for the following:
  - a) Long-term storage of media deemed to be of evidentiary value consistent with the Department's evidence storage protocols and retention schedule.
  - b) The cleansing (degaussing), disposal, and re-issuance of all other media deemed to be of no evidentiary value consistent with the Department's document retention requirements.

## **H. RESTRICTIONS ON USING RECORDING DEVICES**

1. Recording Devices shall only be used in conjunction with official duties.
2. Officers may not activate Recording Devices to secretly record:
  - a) Communications with other police personnel without the permission of the Chief of Police.
  - b) Conversations that concern matters over which the person being recorded would have a reasonable expectation of privacy.
3. Recording Devices are utilized primarily by sworn personnel as authorized by this agency. Officers who are assigned recording devices must utilize such equipment unless otherwise authorized by supervisory personnel.
  - a) All Department issued recording devices and recorded media in any form issued by the department remain the exclusive property of the Department for use only as outlined in this General Order.
  - b) No privately owned recording devices will be utilized by Department personnel while on duty for any reason without the prior authorization of the Chief of Police.

## **I. MEDIA DUPLICATION**

1. All recording media, recorded images and audio recordings are the property of the Department. Dissemination outside of the Department is strictly prohibited without specific written authorization of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
2. 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 Departmental MAVRS technician.

#### **IV. LIMITATIONS**

1. When reviewed, the information from a MAVRS recording can provide a great deal of insight regarding an incident. However, the Department recognizes that these devices can't always capture everything that is seen by an officer or what happens at a scene. These devices can act as a tool, providing information to help explain an event to support officer accounts and witness statements, but are limited in their capacity to provide a total picture of all the facts in an incident. This information may not fully account for things such as officer perspective and knowledge, field of vision, perspective distortion, depiction of colors, lighting conditions, speed of events, environmental factors, and other influences off camera.