

Section 113
**The Use of Mobile Video and Audio
Recording Equipment in Vehicles**

I. Policy

- (A) This policy sets forth principles and guidelines for the utilization of Mobile Video/Audio Recording (MVR) equipment within the Jonesboro Police Department. It will be the policy of this agency to facilitate such technology for the collection of evidence for criminal prosecution, to provide a means for administrative inspection, and to assist in training officers to improve safety and security tactics.

II. Purpose

- (A) To establish policy and procedures on the use of MVR equipment in Jonesboro Police Department vehicles and in the storage, release, and retention of mobile videotapes.

III. Procedures

(A) Training

- (1) Each Jonesboro police officer will receive training on the proper use of MVR equipment.

(a) Training will be accomplished through hands-on training of a Field Training Officer or in an actual classroom environment.

(b) All training shall be documented.

(B) Program Objectives

The Jonesboro Police Department has adopted the use of in-car video/audio recording systems in order to accomplish several objectives, including

1. accurate documentation of events, actions, conditions and statements made during arrests and critical incidents, so as to enhance officer reports, collection of evidence and testimony in court; and
2. enhancement of this agency's ability to review probable cause for arrest, arrest procedures, officer and suspect interaction, and evidence for investigative purposes, as well as for officer evaluation and training.

(C) Operating Procedures

Officers shall adhere to the following procedures when utilizing MVR equipment.

1. MVR equipment installed in vehicles is the responsibility of the officer assigned to that vehicle and will be maintained according to manufacturer's recommendations.
2. Prior to each shift, officers shall determine whether their MVR equipment is working satisfactorily and shall bring any problems at this or other times to the attention of their immediate supervisor as soon as possible.
3. MVR equipment will automatically activate when the vehicle's emergency warning devices are in operation. The equipment may be manually deactivated during non-enforcement activities such as protecting accident scenes from other vehicular traffic.
 - (a) Whenever equipment is manually deactivated, officers shall properly document the reasons for this action.
4. Where possible, officers should ensure that equipment is operating in order to record traffic stops or other enforcement actions. In so doing they will ensure
 - (a) the video recorder is positioned and adjusted to record events;
 - (b) the MVR is not deactivated until the enforcement action is completed, and
 - (c) their wireless microphone is activated in order to provide narration with the video recording to explain the reason for their current or planned enforcement action.
5. Where possible, officers shall also use their MVR equipment to record
 - (a) the actions of suspects during interviews, when undergoing sobriety checks or when placed in custody if the recording would prove useful in later judicial proceedings; and

(b) the circumstances at crime and accident scenes or other events such as the confiscation and documentation of evidence or contraband.

6. Officers shall not erase, reuse or in any manner alter MVR tapes.

7. Officers shall ensure that they have an adequate amount of tape length remaining to complete their tour of duty.

(a) Tapes should be replaced as soon as practical when 30 minutes or fewer remains on the tape.

8. All completed tapes shall be properly removed by a supervisor and submitted into evidence. The proper tape log should be attached to the MVR tape when placed into evidence.

9. MVR tapes shall be removed from or replaced to the locked recorder compartment of the vehicle by supervisors only.

(a) MVR tapes may be changed only under the following circumstances:

- When thirty- (30) minutes or less remains on the tape.
- When the MVR tape needs to be removed for viewing or copying purposes.
- When there is a malfunction of the MVR tape.
- When the vehicle becomes inoperable for an extended period of time.
- When directed by a supervisor.

10. Supervisors should ensure daily that the MVR tape log has the officer's name, date and time of operation and if any evidence exists on the tape that would require a longer retention period.

11. Officers should write the MVR tape number on their daily activity report.

12. Officers will note in their incident/offense, arrest and related reports when video/audio recordings were made during the incident in question.

13. Officers are encouraged to inform their supervisor of any videotaped sequences that may be of value for training purposes.

14. Officers shall only use videotapes provided by this department.

(D) Control and Management of Mobile Video/Audio Recording (MVR) Tapes.

- (1) All MVR tapes will be the property of the Jonesboro Police Department and will not be duplicated and/or used without authorization from the Chief of Police, or his or her designee. Tapes shall be maintained and stored in the evidence holding area and protected as such.
- (2) Original MVR tapes shall not leave the custody of The Jonesboro Police Department.
- (3) All original MVR tapes shall be stored for Three-hundred Sixty Five- (365) days following the last day of use, or as long as necessary for the incident subject to investigation.
- (4) Access to MVR tapes shall be restricted to the Jonesboro Police Department's evidence custodians.
- (5) MVR tapes held as evidence shall be secured and maintained in the evidence holding area, by the evidence custodians, for the prescribed Three-hundred Sixty Five- (365) day retention period.
 - (a) When the retention period has been fulfilled, the MVR tape shall be properly erased with approved equipment and circulated back to the patrol division to be renumbered and reused.
- (6) MVR tapes containing valuable information for case prosecution, criminal or civil proceedings, shall be protected as evidence.
 - (a) MVR tapes that are protected as evidence shall be subject to the same chain of evidence safeguards as detailed in the Jonesboro Police Department's evidence policy.
 - (b) Original MVR tapes shall be duplicated and maintained in safe storage prior to being released to another criminal justice agency for trial reasons.

- (7) Tapes shall be maintained in a manner that allows efficient identification and retrieval.
- (8) No videotapes shall be reissued for operational use unless completely erased by designated department personnel.

(E) Supervisory Responsibilities

Supervisory personnel who manage officers equipped with MVR equipment shall ensure that

- (1) all officers follow established procedures for the use and maintenance of MVR equipment, handling of video/audio recordings and the completion of MVR documentation;
- (2) on at least a monthly basis, they randomly review videotapes and recordings to assist in periodic assessment of officer performance, determine whether MVR equipment is being fully and properly used and to identify material that may be appropriate for training.
- (3) Repairs and replacement of damaged or nonfunctional MVR equipment is performed.