



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Video Evidence Retrieval

Eff. Date 05/19/2016

Purpose

The Madison Police Department realizes the increased role that video evidence plays in investigations of all scope and type. This SOP addresses the collection and disposition of video evidence from **external sources** in order to standardize the procedure department-wide. This SOP does not pertain to video evidence obtained from traffic, district interview rooms and squad cameras. These video files are maintained by the city and can be preserved, saved and copied by filling out a lab request.

Procedure

The following procedure addresses three major components:

- 1) Filling out the Video Retrieval Report Form
- 2) Property tagging of video surveillance evidence
- 3) Making copies of video surveillance evidence

Filling out the Video Retrieval Report Form:

The purpose of the Video Retrieval Report Form is to ensure that a chain of custody for video evidence is sufficiently documented for prosecution purposes. This form is accessed through the MPD intranet under A-Z forms (<https://www.cityofmadison.com/employeeNet/police/internal/forms/>).

This form shall be utilized whenever an officer takes custody of video evidence or video evidence is made available while conducting an investigation. The officer shall make a reasonable attempt to fill out the form in its entirety, however, it is understood that sometimes this will not be possible.

If an officer views surveillance video in the course of conducting an ongoing investigation, they shall document their viewing of that video and the contents observed in the narrative section of their report.

In situations where an officer is dispatched to retrieve video evidence from the originating source after the incident has occurred, the Video Retrieval Report Form will act as an officer's report and shall be placed in the attachment tray to be scanned into LERMS. No supplemental report will be needed.

Property tagging of video surveillance:

When conducting any type of municipal, misdemeanor or felony level investigation where video evidence collection is warranted, the following must be done:

All collected video evidence for any type of investigation must be assigned a property tag number and placed into evidence by the collecting officer.

The purpose for this action is to maintain a chain of custody for these items because they are potentially evidence documenting either municipal ordinance violations or criminal acts. **If a primary officer requests video surveillance for an investigation, the primary officer should attempt to make arrangements to retrieve their own video.** If that is not possible, then an additional responding officer will collect the video evidence, place it into evidence, and fill out the Video Retrieval Report Form.

Making copies of video surveillance:**The criteria for making copies is as follows -**

For all felony level and other major cases, a working copy of the surveillance video shall be made and placed in either the command post (if there is one) or a district tray specifically designed to hold such copies for assigned detectives. If an officer does not have the ability to copy the video, the reason should be noted on the Video Retrieval Report Form. If the officer does not know how to copy the video, training will be provided at their request.

For cases that do not meet the threshold described above, copies do not need to be made. It is however expected that the original evidence shall still be placed in property and assigned a property tag number and the Video Retrieval Report Form will be completed.

(Reviewed Only: 01/09/2017, 12/26/2017, 01/30/2019)