



# SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



## *Procedure 408 – Digital Photography*

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Forms Referenced in Procedure:	SAPD Form #85-1 SAPD Form #168	Related Procedures:	None

### **.01 INTRODUCTION**

- A. The purpose of this procedure is to have a Department policy, in place, which maintains the integrity and consistency of the handling of digital photographic images and equipment.
- B. The purpose of photography and imaging in law enforcement is to record visible details, evidence, and observable material. Photography is used to visually document observable facts. The San Antonio Police Department recognizes digital photography technology as a tool for documentation.

### **.02 POLICY FOR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

- A. Members will use only Department-approved digital photographic equipment, storage media, and download stations.
- B. Members will not use approved digital photographic equipment, storage media, and download stations for personal purposes.
- C. Members will not manipulate photographs.
- D. All photographs taken with departmental equipment are the property of the San Antonio Police Department.
- E. The Photo Services Lab will coordinate the use of City photographic equipment for non-evidentiary departmental use.
- F. Members taking digital images of potential evidentiary value must follow Section .03, *Recording Digital Images*, and Section .04, *Downloading and Submission of Images*, in this procedure.

### **.03 RECORDING DIGITAL IMAGES**

- A. The use of personal digital photographic equipment, including any personal digital device capable of capturing digital images, by members for evidentiary photographs is prohibited.
- B. The only exception to .03A would be when a member determines that circumstances are of such a critical nature that photographic images are immediately required and department-approved digital photographic equipment is not readily available, members may use their personal digital photographic equipment. When used:
  - 1. The digital photographs taken with personal equipment (under this exception) are the property of the San Antonio Police Department.
  - 2. Members will coordinate with the Photo Services Lab for the removal of evidentiary digital photographic images (under this exception) from personal digital equipment used for departmental use.
  - 3. Members will not take any additional digital photos (with their personal digital photographic equipment) until the evidentiary digital photographic images have been removed with the assistance of the Photo Services Lab.
  - 4. Members agree to provide full access to their personal photographic equipment used under this exception (as necessary) to allow the Photo Services Lab to be able to successfully recover any evidentiary digital photographic images.



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5. Members will notify their supervisor immediately, but no later than the end of their tour of duty, when they utilize their personal equipment for taking digital photographs under these exceptions.
  6. Members will provide full details of the circumstances requiring the use of personal equipment for taking digital photographs in their report.
- C. Any evidentiary photographs taken by members with or without city equipment are subject to seizure by the San Antonio Police Department.
  - D. Prior to the use of a digital camera for a case or event, the media card/camera will be formatted.
  - E. Each case or event where digital photographs are taken will be placed on separate media cards. It may be necessary to use more than one card per case or event.
  - F. An image depicting the case number or name of event, the date, the location, and photographer, will be recorded on the media card SAPD Form #168, *Photo Board*. In the event that the location of photography changes, an additional image should be recorded with the updated information.
  - G. At the completion of the case or event the media card will be downloaded as soon as possible and no later than the end of the member's tour of duty.
  - H. No images will be deleted from the media card(s) prior to download.
  - I. The images will only be viewed at the time of recording to determine that the necessary images are being recorded correctly. When the images are viewed they will be viewed in the camera that recorded them. At no time will the media card be removed and viewed from a card reader.
  - J. At no time will the original evidentiary photograph or digital image be altered or enhanced. Any required enhancements, to copies of the original evidentiary photographic or digital images, will be done solely by the Photo Services Lab.
  - K. Digital evidentiary photographs shall not be copied, printed, or used for personal or non-departmental use.

### **.04 DOWNLOADING AND SUBMISSION OF IMAGES**

- A. Images will only be downloaded at approved Department download stations.
- B. The image will be downloaded to a single-write media, and sent to the Photo Services Lab for image storage. This single-write media becomes the original.
- C. The media will be marked as "Master."
- D. The media will be labeled by legibly printing the following information:
  1. The case number of the offense or event;
  2. The date the images were downloaded to the single-write media;
  3. The time the images were downloaded to the single-write media;
  4. The photographer's name and badge number; and
  5. The individual's name performing download if different from photographer.



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- E. Prior to submitting the media to the Photo Services Lab, the downloaded information will be checked to ensure that the download was successful. Place your initials on the media after verification.
- F. The Department recognizes cases that require immediate access to all available information. Therefore, it is permissible in those cases to make one working copy for the immediate follow-up unit. Units wishing to utilize this process must follow their unit's SOP for control and handling of this copy. At no time during this process will more than one copy be generated.
  - 1. The media will be marked as "Copy."
  - 2. The media will be labeled as directed in Section .04D, in this procedure.
  - 3. A notation on the SAPD Form #85-1, *Photographer's Record Card* will indicate that the copy has been made.
  - 4. The images and the media will be maintained in the follow-up unit's case file.
  - 5. The media will be returned to the Photo Services Lab when requested by the Photo Services Lab Supervisor.
- G. Once the download has been determined to be successful, the media card will be formatted and returned to service.
- H. Images will not be saved or stored in any other manner than what has been specifically addressed in this procedure.
- I. In the event that the download stations are unavailable due to equipment malfunctions, the media card will be submitted to the Photo Services Lab.
- J. Members will prepare SAPD Form #85-1 for each download media or media card submitted to the Photo Services Lab. The media and SAPD Form #85-1 will be placed in a disc sleeve, envelope, or case.
- K. Place the download media or media card with the SAPD Form #85-1 in a secured Photo Services Lab drop box. The Photo Services Lab drop boxes will be located at each of the substations and the Security Desk at 214 W. Nueva.
- L. The Photo Services Lab is the central depository for evidentiary photographic digital images.