



# Burlington Fire Department

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<b>Section: 00- Administration</b>	
<b>SOG Number: 00.09</b>	<b>Effective Date: Sept. 1, 2018</b>
<b>Subject: In Vehicle Cameras</b>	
<b>By Order of Fire Chief Steven A. Locke</b>	

## **I. Purpose:**

This policy provides guidance for the use of in-vehicle owned by the Burlington Fire Department in such a way that the privacy rights of Department personnel, patients, fire victims and the general public are respected; and the professional image of the department is maintained.

## **II. Scope:**

This policy applies to all Burlington Fire Department employees who have direct involvement with in-vehicle cameras owned by the Burlington Fire Department. The authority to deviate from this guideline rests with the Chief Engineer or his/her designee.

## **III. Definitions:**

Images: Digital photographs, digital images, video recordings, or electronic files containing a graphic image or series of images. This definition shall extend to derivations of the term images, including image, imagery and imaging.

## **IV. Guidelines:**

### A). On-Duty Photography

1. Fire Department personnel are prohibited from using non-department owned in-vehicle cameras while on-duty. The Chief Engineer may grant an exception to this rule on an individual basis.
2. Only personnel who have been trained on compliance with this policy and who have been approved by the Chief Engineer shall be permitted to use in-vehicle cameras pursuant to this policy.

3. On-duty personnel shall only take images with in vehicle cameras that are of business related matters of the department and events for purposes of incident documentation, evidence, training, investigation, and/or public relations.
4. The Chief Engineer or his/her designee may inspect any department owned camera in the possession of an on-duty member at any time. Members are advised that they have no expectation of privacy in the contents of any department owned camera in their possession while on-duty.
5. All images taken with a department owned camera by on-duty personnel shall be preserved and shall not be deleted without the written permission of the Chief Engineer or his/her designee, except those that are recorded over as part of the normal operation of the camera.
6. All images taken by on-duty personnel are the sole property of the department, and are under the control of the Chief Engineer or his/her designee
7. Personnel are expressly prohibited from taking images of another person in any location where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy.

B). Responding to, operating at, and returning from incident scenes.

1. In-vehicle cameras shall automatically initiate with an incident response upon the activation of the emergency lights. Stand-alone systems will be initiated manually by the vehicle operator or RTS personnel.
2. Imagery taken by on-duty personnel while responding to, operating at, and returning from incident scenes shall be for incident documentation, evidentiary, training, investigation, and/or public relations purposes only, and shall be subject to any limitations or restrictions imposed by the incident commander.
3. The taking of imagery shall not interfere with nor delay operational activities.

C). Handling and Preservation of Images.

1. Fire department owned images shall not be used, printed, copied, scanned, e-mailed, texted, forwarded, posted, uploaded, shared, reproduced, or distributed in any manner except as provided herein in this policy. The prohibition specifically includes the posting of any department images on personal websites until formally released as a public record.
2. All fire department owned images as described in this policy shall be downloaded from the camera immediately after an event of significance.
3. Imagery that has a known evidentiary value, including vehicular accidents involving department vehicles, fire scenes showing evidence of fire cause and origin, incident scenes showing the locations of victims, fire code violations, etc., require that a Chain of Custody form be initiated by the photographer and forwarded with the imagery.

4. Images in the secured archive shall not be accessed by any party, or altered via any software product or utility such as Photoshop®, unless express permission is granted in writing by the Chief Engineer or his/her designee.
5. The use of fire department images by any member, and the release of any images by the department as public records, shall be subject to the Chief Engineer or his/her designee.
6. Use of department owned in-vehicle cameras to take images for personal purposes is strictly prohibited.
7. Violation of this policy or failure to permit inspection of any device covered in this policy may result in disciplinary action.

D). Personal Images Exception

1. This policy shall not apply to images taken by on-duty personnel with a personally owned camera for purely personal and non-business purposes. This exception is intended to include non-work related images of friends and family members during a fire station visit, personal images of co-workers such as co-workers posing for a group photo, birthday celebration of an on-duty member, or promotional celebration.
2. This exception shall not apply to imagery taken at emergency scenes.
3. Imagery taken pursuant to this exception shall not contain profanity, nudity or partial nudity, horseplay, hazing, harassment, be offensive, or depict vulgar or sexually suggestive images.
4. Imagery taken pursuant to this exception shall not be used or sold for profit.
5. Any image taken pursuant to this exception that captures public or business related matters of the department shall be considered to be a department owned photo.

**V. Responsibility:**

It is the responsibility of all members to read, understand and follow this Standard Operating Guideline

Revision History			
Revision Date	Section	Summary	Principal Author
Initial Release of Document	All	This document supersedes Department Directive	