Sioux Falls Police Department

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Policy: **Photographic Evidence Collection**	Related Policies:	Section #: 1200 Evidence
		Policy #: 1202
		Effective: 6/2020
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This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can be used as basis of a complaint by this department for nonjudicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.

Policy Owner: ISD

Reference:

Sensitivity Level: ☒ Public   ☐ Law Enforcement Eyes Only

1. Purpose:

    This policy is created to give guidance to department personnel on the proper collection of photographic evidence.

2. Policy:
    Still image photography will be done with digital cameras or cell phones. The images will be stored in the associated case within Zuercher. Images normally will be of crime scenes, traffic accidents, for case documentation, for public relations or for other investigative purposes. Photographic documentation of scenes or criminal investigations should be accurate and thorough. Images captured must be relevant to the case and appropriate in nature.

    Digital image security and integrity is extremely important. No changes will ever be made to original images as none are allowed by the system. There are many operations and databases, watchdogs if you will, working out of sight recording every event that happens to each image.

3. Definitions:

    3.1. Types of crime scene photographs

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3.1.1. **Overall** – Orientation photos or long range photos, provide a general view of the entire scene, building, person, etc.   Multiple overall photos from different angles should be taken to document the scene thoroughly.

3.1.2. **Midrange** – Shows the relationship between items of evidence or objects at the scene in relation to each other.

3.1.3. **Close-up** – Shows the specific item being documented as evidence. This may include a VIN or serial number, a cigarette butt, or a burglary tool. Several rules apply for a proper close-up photo. A scale must be used for anything that needs to show size or that may be forensically compared back to the original source. Examples would include injuries, fingerprints, tool marks, tire tracks, shoe prints or impressions, bloodstains, etc. Proper use of the scale is to photograph it at 90 degrees (or perpendicular to the camera view) and fill the frame with the object you are documenting. Always have a gloved hand when holding the scale. If using a digital camera, the photographs should be taken utilizing the highest resolution possible.

3.2. **System Administrator** – is the Crime Lab director or the Police Application Specialist. Any changes in permission levels should go through the chain of command. Problems or errors should be brought to the attention of a system administrator as soon as possible.

4. Procedure:

4.1. Basic Photography

4.1.1. Zuercher can store several different image file formats. It is unable to store TIFF format.

4.1.2. If using a digital camera, the highest JPG resolution should be used. If using a cell phone, the cell phone settings should be set to JPG.

4.1.3. The Crime Lab by the nature of its work will normally record in much higher resolutions and occasionally in uncompressed formats like RAW or TIFF which are not compatible with Zuercher. These images will be placed onto a flash drive and entered into evidence.

4.2. Once photography is completed the officer or forensic specialist will maintain chain of custody over the image storage card until it is archived in Zuercher. At no time will images be deleted from the storage card. All images taken on a case must be retained as evidence.

4.3. Archiving in Zuercher can be done at any computer that has access to Zuercher and has a port through which the photos can be accessed.

4.3.1. Archiving Procedure for digital camera cards

    4.3.1.1.   Sign onto Zuercher with your normal City network username and password.

    4.3.1.2.   Insert the storage card into the proper slot in a card reader which needs to be attached to the computer.

    4.3.1.3.   Open the case you want to download the photos to.

    4.3.1.4.   Click on the "Show Property / Evidence" tab in the "Property / Evidence" section of the case

    4.3.1.5.   On the left hand side under "Menu" click on the "Add Property / Evidence" tab

    4.3.1.6.   Select "Digital Photo"

    4.3.1.7.   Make sure your name is in the collected by section

    4.3.1.8.   Select the photos you want to download and click "open". The photos will transfer to the case.

    4.3.1.9.   When done, the storage card can be removed from the port. The images will still be on the card. Format the card prior to removing it from the computer or format the card in the camera.

4.3.2. Archiving Procedure for cell phone images

    4.3.2.1.   Sign onto Zuercher with your normal City network username and password.

    4.3.2.2.   Open the case you want to download the photos to.

    4.3.2.3.   Plug your cell phone into the computer.

    4.3.2.4.   Open your phone and "allow" the device to be accessed by the computer.

    4.3.2.5.   Create a temporary file on the desktop of the computer.

    4.3.2.6.   Open "My Computer" or "This PC" and select the cell phone device.

    4.3.2.7.   Select the "Internal Storage" of the cell phone.

    4.3.2.8.   Open the folder that contains the images.

4.3.2.9. Select the images to be attached to the case in Zuercher. "Cut" the images and "Paste" them into the temporary folder you created on the desktop.

4.3.2.10. In Zuercher, click on the "Show Property / Evidence" tab in the "Property / Evidence" section of the case.

4.3.2.11. On the left hand side under "Menu" click on the "Add Property / Evidence" tab

4.3.2.12. Select "Digital Photo"

4.3.2.13. Make sure your name is in the collected by section

4.3.2.14. Select the photos you want to download from the temporary file you created on the desktop and click "open". The photos will transfer to the case.

4.3.2.15. After you verify the photos have been attached to the case in Zuercher, delete the temporary folder you created on the desktop. Because you cut them from your phone, they will no longer be there. If you only "Copied" and "Pasted" from your cell phone originally, you will need to delete the images from the cell phone.

4.4. Viewing Images

4.4.1. Viewing images stored in Zuercher is done through Zuercher.

4.4.2. To see thumbnail images of the photos, one can open the "Property / Evidence" tab within the case and check the box beside "Show Previews" in the upper left hand section of the screen.

4.4.3. To see a larger image, you will need to either double click on the item number of the photo you want to enlarge or check the box next to the image(s) you want to export and then click "Export Digital Evidence" on the left hand side of the screen. You will be forced to save the photos on your computer or to another device.

4.5. Printing Images

4.5.1. To have photos printed, a new task must be made. In the upper right hand side of the main screen within the case in Zuercher, you have to click on "New Task"

Create a "Crime Lab Photo Printing" task with a due date and provide the photos that are needed to be printed in the comments, and then click ok.