

KINGMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

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SECTION 31.0 PRESERVATION OF DIGITAL IMAGES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and guidelines for the use of digital photography (image capturing), processing and storage of image files for evidentiary value. The objective is to ensure the successful introduction of digital imagery as evidence in the court of law.

Digital Image Capturing

1. Whenever possible and practicable, it is preferable to use the department equipment. If another imaging equipment is used the officer shall note that fact in the report or evidence log. This note shall show make, model and serial number of the equipment.
2. All digital images captured will represent a fair and reasonable representation of the item or scene photographed.
3. The original image captured shall be preserved.
4. All original images captured shall be maintained as evidence.
5. No images will be deleted.

Digital Image Processing

Digital image processing is an acceptable practice provided the following criteria are met:

1. The original image is preserved.
2. Image enhancement will only be performed on duplicates of the original image(s).
3. All processing steps must be logged when the working duplicate is enhanced.
4. The end result is presented as an enhanced image, which may be reproduced by applying the logged steps to the original image.

Digital Image Storage

1. Duplication of original images should be performed by the use of a stand alone disk maker.
2. All original images with original file names will be placed on two discs that can be written on only once and then is only readable. The discs will be labeled with the date, time, and location the picture was taken, case number, the photographer, the person making the duplicate and any other important information associated with the image. One disc will be marked "Original Evidence" and the second one marked "Original working". The original image will be preserved in its original file format.
3. The original working disc of the images will be used by the officer to allow for further image processing or to write more discs from.
4. The original evidence disc shall be place in a disc envelope and seal with evidence tape and attach to the evidence log.
5. Once all discs have been made and verified as accurately duplicated, the images may then be removed from the media card or digital camera memory to allow for the proper re-use of the equipment.
6. The media card can be kept and secured as evidence if ordered by a supervisor.

Use of digital images

1. No alterations of original images will be allowed.
2. Enhancement to images made from files are to be authorized by a supervisor and for the following reasons only:
 - A. Contrast and Brightness
 - B. Color balance
 - C. Enlargement
 - D. Sharpness Enhancement
 - E. Adding tags and/or marks to highlight and/or identify an item within the image.
 - F. Or as authorized by the Sheriff.
3. Enhancements to a copy of an image shall be documented in a supplemental report, completed by officer making the enhancements.
4. Enhanced copies shall be saved and downloaded into to a disc marked enhanced.
5. An un-enhanced original shall be maintained, in addition to any enhanced image.

Best User Guidelines

1. Check the camera for any damage,
2. Check the batteries, that they are charged,
3. Check the date and time,
4. Used the camera to format any storage devise and to clean the storage device.

For Evidence collection the general guideline, not a rule, is to:

1. Set the camera on auto mode, to allow the camera to make its own settings for speed and aperture,
2. Set the recording pixels to (maximum),
3. Set the compression ratio to (fine).

Related Sections:

- ✓ SECTION 24 County Property