

## Department Cameras

Supersedes: 03-05-04  
Effective: 06-01-09

The department issued cameras and associated equipment are intended to aid Supervisory personnel in the collection and documentation of pertinent physical conditions at the scene of an incident. The priority use should be to document the presence or absence of dynamic or perishable conditions during the course of an investigation or other Department related matter.

1. The daily vehicle inventory or “check-out” should include ensuring that any Department issued camera and related equipment is present and appears to be in good condition. Missing and/or damaged equipment should be reported to the Shift Commander.
2. The loaning of the camera, memory card medium, or other accessories to non-Department or non-Supervisory personnel without the express permission of a member of the BEMS Command Staff is prohibited as is the use of the camera or any of its related equipment for non-Department related matters.
3. As part of a thorough investigation, in addition to collecting applicable incident reports and / or witness statements, Supervisors are encouraged to photograph the following types of situations:
  - 3.1. Property damage allegedly caused by a department vehicle or member (see #4)
  - 3.2. Preservation of physical evidence involving an alleged infraction of Department Rules and Rules and Regulations, or Standard Operating Procedure
  - 3.3. Potential health or safety concern, or failure of a critical piece of equipment.
  - 3.4. Documentation of a patient’s environment where the mechanism of injury appears inconsistent with the patient’s physical presentation. For example, assisting emergency department personnel by documenting severe vehicle damage in the case of a patient presenting with relatively minor injuries.
  - 3.5. Any other situation in which the Supervisor feels photographs would be useful in the investigation or documentation of an incident.
4. The Boston Police Department’s Identification Unit is the primary unit responsible for photographic documentation of major or personal injury crashes involving City or Department vehicles, and can be called for twenty-four (24) hours a day through Dispatch Operations. Collecting photographic evidence at the scene of an incident involving personal injury will be considered secondary to ensuring adequate patient care is being provided and coordinating the EMS response to the incident. Once these primary duties and responsibilities have been met, Supervisors may document photographic evidence at a crash scene in conjunction with the BPD ID unit, or while awaiting their arrival.

5. At the end of each photographic session, the memory card should be removed from the camera and placed in a plastic protector case. The memory card should then be delivered to EMS Headquarters either in person or via inter-department mail along with the MVC paperwork, and other incident reports as required. Please note which vehicle the memory card(s) came from so that the Profession Standards Division can keep a ready stock of cards available in each vehicle.
6. Photographs will be downloaded and labeled by Professional Standards, and the memory cards will then be returned to the appropriate vehicle. At least three memory cards will be issued with each camera, thus ensuring an adequate supply.
7. Any photographs containing individually identifiable information are covered by the HIPAA Privacy rule and must be protected in the same manner as patient care reports and other such documentation.
8. Any on-scene images and any other images taken by an employee in the course and scope of their employment are solely the property of Boston EMS and not the property of the individual department member. This includes any image inadvertently taken with a department member's personally owned cell phone camera or other digital imaging device.
9. Except for the provisions noted in section 5 and 6 of this policy, no images taken by an employee in the course and scope of their employment may be used, printed, copied, scanned, emailed, posted, shared or distributed in any other manner without prior approval by a member of the Boston EMS Command Staff. This prohibition includes posting photos or videos on personal websites such as FaceBook or MySpace, or on websites such as YouTube, or emailing images to friends or colleagues.