

Office of the Sheriff
Somerset County, Maryland

General Order: 01-14-06

Effective Date: September 1, 2014

Revised Date: January 1, 2014

Chapter 17

Section 1

Maintenance of Assigned Patrol Vehicles

1. Purpose

- A. The purpose of this directive is to provide guidelines for the operation, care, and servicing of vehicles owned, leased, or utilized by the Sheriff's office.

2. Policy

- A. Deputies may be assigned agency vehicles on a 24 hours basis for transportation only and call outs within the confines of Somerset County and only in accordance with these policies and procedures.
- B. Exceptions to these rules may be granted only by the Sheriff or his designee.
- C. Violations of policies may result in the loss of vehicle assignment and reassignment to a non-driving position with the Somerset County Sheriff's Office, as well as disciplinary action, if warranted.
- D. It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to maintain and operate vehicles owned, leased, or utilized by the Office in a safe and efficient manner, and in conformance with applicable Maryland State laws.

3. Vehicle Maintenance

- A. Responsibility for requesting maintenance scheduling is that of the Deputy who is permanently or temporarily assigned the vehicle at the time maintenance is required, and the Deputy is responsible for delivering the assigned patrol vehicle to the garage for maintenance.
- B. Each Deputy will ensure that regularly scheduled service or maintenance is completed and will advise his/her supervisor of the scheduled service.
- C. After completion of the repairs of maintenance, the Deputy will provide the maintenance order to the fleet supervisor who will record the maintenance/service on the vehicle maintenance log and place a copy of the maintenance/service order in the administration files section.
- D. Only authorized Sheriff's Office employees or maintenance/repair technicians may operate Somerset County Sheriff's Office patrol vehicles.
- E. Only authorized maintenance/repair technicians will repair or service patrol vehicles.
- F. Deputies using patrol vehicles are responsible for their care. Patrol vehicles will be kept clean, i.e. trunk clean and uncluttered, and the exterior free of dirt and debris.
- G. Each Deputy will be responsible for washing his/her assigned patrol vehicle on a regular basis.
- H. If an Office owned vehicle becomes disabled due to collision damage, mechanical failure, etc., the vehicle will be towed by the nearest available towing service to the Somerset County Sheriff's Office.
- I. Arrangements for dealership warranty repairs shall be made by the fleet supervisor.
- J. The need for extensive vehicle repairs shall be brought to the attention of the Sheriff or Chief Deputy before such repairs are made.
- K. Each Deputy will inspect his/her patrol vehicle before each shift for any damage.
- L. Each Deputy will be responsible to maintain at least a ½ tank of fuel in the patrol vehicle at all times.
- M. Due to the potential of causing serious damage to the mobile radio, as well as other electrical equipment, operators of SCSO vehicles are prohibited from assisting motorists with jump-starting their vehicles (providing "hot shots").

4. Damage to Patrol Vehicles

- A. A Deputy finding damage to his/her patrol vehicle must report it immediately to his/her supervisor.
- B. Damage caused by a traffic accident will be reported immediately to the supervisor. In the event the damage occurs off-duty, such report will be made to the supervisor.
- C. If warranted, the supervisor may respond to the scene to ensure that an investigation is completed and a report is forwarded to the Chief Deputy.
- D. Patrol vehicles will be towed to the Somerset County Sheriff's Office.
- E. Patrol vehicles that will be taken to a body shop or dealership will be placed in a secure location will have all weapons removed. Police equipment should be removed in the event the patrol vehicle can not be locked or if it will be in storage for an extended period.

5. Non-Issue Vehicle Equipment

- A. Prior to installing non-approved vehicle equipment, the Deputy will submit a SCSO Form 17 to his/her immediate supervisor requesting to install equipment in the assigned patrol vehicle.
- B. If the request is approved, the SCSO Form 17 will be signed by the supervisor and placed in the patrol vehicle's maintenance/service file.
- C. The equipment will be installed by personnel approved by the Sheriff or his designee.
- D. Non-issued equipment will not be permitted to interfere with the normal operation of official equipment issued by the Somerset County Sheriff's Office.
- E. SCSO issued equipment will not be altered or moved in patrol vehicles unless approved by the Sheriff or his designee.

6. Inspection of Patrol Vehicles

- A. Supervisors or their designees may inspect all patrol vehicles under their command at anytime periodically.
- B. Periodic supervisory inspections will include a thorough check for damage to the exterior other than normal wear, any obvious wiring, switches or extra lights that were not installed without the knowledge or approval of their supervisor.

- C. The supervisor will instruct the assigned Deputy to remove any unapproved equipment that is found.
- D. Supervisors who inspect patrol vehicles will be complete a Motor Vehicle and Issued Equipment Inspection, Report Form 153.

7. Unattended Patrol Vehicles

- A. Before leaving a parked patrol vehicle, Deputies will turn off the ignition.
- B. When leaving the patrol vehicle, Deputies shall remove the keys from the ignition and ensure the patrol vehicle is secured.

8. Misuse of Sheriff's Office Assigned Equipment

- A. All personnel of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office shall be held responsible for the proper use and care of issued equipment.
- B. Incidents of neglect, alteration and destruction, loss or other misuse of equipment shall not be condoned and shall be reported by any employee who has such knowledge.
- C. Assigned patrol vehicles will not be used to carry, haul, attach or display any item to the patrol vehicle that would discredit the Somerset County Sheriff's Office.
- D. Deputies shall not alter, misuse or damage any equipment issued by the Somerset County Sheriff's Office.

9. Obedience to Traffic Laws

- A. Deputies operating patrol vehicles will conform to all laws regulating traffic and set an example of good driving to the public.
- B. While patrolling or stopping the patrol vehicle, Deputies will take special care not to obstruct the free flow of traffic.
- C. If the patrol vehicle is stopped on the travel portion of the roadway, the emergency lights shall be activated.

10. Operation of SCSO Vehicles

- A. Operators are required to operate agency vehicles in a safe, legal, and courteous manner at all times. When not engaged in an emergency response, operators of agency vehicles will observe all traffic laws.

- B. Only Somerset County Sheriff's Office employees may use Office equipment, including the radio and weapons.
- C. All Deputies in marked patrol vehicles must be aware they are being observed by the general public and are considered on duty by all citizens. Therefore, they must stop all serious and willful traffic violators and take appropriate action whenever possible.
- D. Deputies shall not use assigned patrol vehicles to patronize establishments that dispense alcoholic beverages unless the establishment has a dining area.
- E. All employees are prohibited from operating a SCSO vehicle while, or within 8 hours after, consuming alcoholic beverages, or any medication that may impair the person's ability to operate a vehicle in a safe manner.
- F. Assigned patrol vehicles may not be taken out of the county except for official business and in the performance of official duties, and only then after notifying Somerset County Emergency Services Dispatch.
- G. Any employee needing a duplicate key must have the permission of the First Sergeant.
- H. Pets of any description or materials that may cause damage to patrol vehicles or adverse comments from the general public may not be transported in assigned patrol vehicles.
- I. To enhance safety while operating agency vehicles operators will not use cell phones, for talking, emailing or text messaging, while driving except in situations where the use of a cell phone is necessary for the performance of duty and it is not safe or practical to pull off the traveled portion of the roadway.
- J. Deputies not fit for full duty may not use SCSO vehicles and their operation of any vehicle owned or used by the Office of the Sheriff is suspended for the duration of the disability.

11. Somerset County Sheriff's Office Utility Vehicles – Humvees and Heavy Duty Truck

- A. Only authorized Sheriff's Office employees or maintenance/repair technicians may operate the Somerset County Sheriff's Office Utility Vehicles, including a Humvee or Heavy Duty Truck.

- B. Deputies must pass an approved training course before operating a Somerset County Sheriff's Office Utility Vehicle.
- C. Somerset County Sheriff's Office Utility Vehicles shall not be used to extricate or tow privately owned vehicles.
- D. The operating speed of Somerset County Sheriff's Office Humvees in high water is not to exceed 5 mph.
- E. Only personnel designated by the Chief Deputy may operate the Somerset County Sheriff's Office Heavy Duty Truck.
- F. The operating speed of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office Heavy Duty Truck on public roadways shall not under any circumstance exceed 40 mph.
- G. The operating speed of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office Heavy Duty Truck during high water is not to exceed 5 mph.

12. Off – Duty Operation

- A. While operating patrol vehicles off duty, Deputies will monitor the radio and answer all calls directed to him/her or any emergency call dispatched he/she can readily respond to.
- B. While operating patrol vehicles off duty, Deputies must be available to assist with calls for service if needed, and advise Somerset Central 911 when responding to a call or when taking any law enforcement action.
- C. Deputies will not operate patrol vehicles while shirtless or shoeless. Casual attire is permitted.
- D. Deputies must possess his/her assigned Sheriff's Office ID cards and be armed while in his/her assigned patrol vehicles.
- E. The Deputy and family members will be required to wear seat belts or approved child safety seats.
- F. Immediate family members are permitted to accompany Deputies in the patrol vehicles when off duty.
- G. When operating an agency vehicle off-duty the deputy must be armed with an issued or approved handgun, a secondary less-than-lethal use of force option (i.e. baton, pepper spray or Taser®), the agency issued identification card and a set of handcuffs on his/her person or within the vehicle.

13. Fleet Supervisor

- A. The Fleet Supervisor is responsible for maintaining SCSO vehicle maintenance records.
- B. The Fleet Supervisor will conduct quarterly inspections of all spare vehicles and arrange for any needed maintenance or repairs.
- C. A duplicate set of keys for all patrol vehicles will be kept by the Fleet Supervisor.

14. Ride Along Program

- A. The Office of the Sheriff permits civilians to accompany deputies on patrol for valid educational and public relations purposes.
- B. Any individual desiring to accompany a deputy on patrol must be at least eighteen years of age, submit a written request stating the deputy's name (if there is a preference), the date and time desired, and the reason for the ride-along.
- C. The written request may be waived if the person requesting the ride-along is an employee of Somerset County or an immediate member of a deputy's family.
- D. Supervisory approval must be obtained prior to any person participating in the ride-along program. In addition, all persons participating must complete a Waiver and Release Form before being allowed to ride.

15. Escorts

A. Non-Emergency Escorts

- 1) Escort arrangements for non-emergency escorts (i.e., funerals, hazardous materials shipments, highway construction equipment, parades, etc.) are the responsibility of the Shift Supervisor.

B. VIP Escorts

- 1) Escorts for prominent public officials, persons in jeopardy, etc. may be granted by the Shift Supervisor or above.
- 2) However, in the case of an emergency and a supervisor is unavailable, the ranking Deputy will arrange the escort providing there is sufficient manpower available to handle the escort along with the normal calls for service in a safe manner.

C. Emergency Escorts

- 1) Deputies will not escort civilian vehicles in emergency situations. As an alternative they will call for medical assistance, or transport the victim in their patrol vehicle if no reasonable alternative exists.
- 2) Emergency escorts will only be provided in a life-threatening situation.
- 3) Supervisory approval if available should be obtained prior to an emergency escort.

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Section 2

Departmental Accidents

1. Purpose

- A. The purpose of this directive is to provide guidelines for the investigation of motor vehicle collisions involving Somerset County Sheriff's Office vehicles.

2. Policy

- A. It is the policy of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office to thoroughly investigate all motor vehicle collisions involving department vehicles (departmental accidents), with the primary objective of determining whether the collision was preventable or non-preventable on the part of the employee.

3. Definitions

A. Departmental Accident:

Any motor vehicle collision that involves a department vehicle, whether parked and unattended or being operated, and involves either property damage or injury. The extent of the damage or injury is not significant in defining a departmental accident, but may be taken into consideration when initiating disciplinary actions. In addition, the location of the collision is not significant in defining a departmental accident, and includes roadways, parking lots, private property, etc.

B. Department Vehicle:

Any motorized vehicle owned, leased, or utilized by the Somerset County Sheriff's Office.

C. Employee:

All personnel, sworn and non-sworn, employed by the Somerset County Sheriff's Office.

D. Preventable Accident:

Any motor vehicle collision that was caused by the operator, or could have reasonably been prevented if the Office vehicle was operated in a safe manner and/or in conformance with Maryland Vehicle law or Somerset County Sheriff's Office policy.

E. Serious Physical Injury:

Bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death, causes serious permanent disfigurement, or results in long-term loss or impairment of the functioning of any bodily member or organ.

4. Investigation Procedures

- A. The following procedures apply to any situation where a department vehicle is involved in a motor vehicle collision.
- B. A supervisor or acting supervisor the rank of corporal or above will investigate all departmental accidents.
- C. In cases that involve death or serious physical injury a motor vehicle, an allied agency may be requested to complete the investigation.
- D. **MAARS form** - The Maryland Automated Accident Reporting System (MAARS) form will be completed in its entirety and submitted by the end of the investigator's shift.
- E. **LGIT Vehicle Accident Report** - The Local Government Insurance Trust Vehicle Accident Report will be completed in its entirety and submitted by the end of the investigator's shift.
- F. **Driver's Statements** - When possible and applicable, a written driver's statement will be obtained from every civilian driver involved in a departmental accident and submitted with the MARRS form. In cases where a civilian refuses to provide a statement, such refusal will be indicated in the investigator's report.

- G. **Witness Statements** - When possible and applicable, a written witness statement will be obtained from every person involved in the collision or who witnessed the collision and submitted with the MARRS form. In cases where a civilian refuses to provide a statement, such refusal will be indicated in the investigator's report.
- H. **Injury or Illness Report** - If applicable, the Somerset County Sheriff's Office Form 100 Injury or Illness Report will be completed in its entirety and submitted by the end of the investigator's shift.
- I. **Supplemental Reports** - Supplemental and/or follow-up reports will be completed and submitted by the investigator or other parties to the collision as needed.
- J. The investigator may file appropriate charges against any and all persons who in his/her opinion have violated Maryland vehicle law.
- K. The investigator or his/her designee will take photographs of every departmental accident. The photographs will depict any property damage, vehicle damage, and the general geographical layout of the accident scene.
- L. In cases where the employee is incapacitated or refuses to complete the required forms/reports, the investigator will complete them and indicate the incapacitation or refusal.

5. Driver Responsibilities

- A. Drivers of a department vehicle involved in a collision will be responsible for the following:
 - 1) If possible, immediately report the incident by radio.
 - 2) Submit to a medical examination when directed by a supervisor, even if no apparent injury has been sustained.
 - 3) Complete and submit a detailed report of the collision within three days of the incident.

6. Processing Departmental Accident Reports

- A. Departmental accident reports will be processed in the following manner:
 - 1) The investigator will forward his/her reports and related documents, via the chain of command, to the Accident Review Board Chairperson

- 2) The Chairperson will ensure that all departmental accident reports and related documents are complete and made available to each member of the Accident Review Board.

7. Accident Review Board

- A. The Sheriff appoints members to the Accident Review Board. The Board will consist of three (3) members:
 - 1) First Sergeant serves as chairperson
 - 2) The Fleet Coordinator
 - 3) A supervisor the rank of Sergeant or above
- B. The Accident Review Board will meet as needed, at the time and place designated by the chairperson. Departmental accidents will be presented to the Review Board by the chairperson.
- C. The duties, responsibilities, and procedures of the Accident Review Board include the following:
 - 1) Review departmental accident case files.
 - 2) Through a majority vote, determine if a departmental accident was preventable or non-preventable.
 - 3) If the Board determines that a departmental accident was preventable by the affected deputy, forward the Board's report to the affected deputy's supervisor for further action.
 - 4) The report may contain a recommendation for disciplinary action which may be taken only in accordance with the LEOBR.

8. Disciplinary Actions

- A. The use of a SCSO vehicle is a privilege, and deputies who exhibit carelessness or neglect in the operation of a SCSO vehicle may be denied the privilege until they have undergone retraining and/or have demonstrated that similar carelessness or neglect is unlikely to be repeated. The following is the minimum amount of time that a deputy, regardless of rank, will lose their privilege for preventable departmental accidents:

- B. The type and severity of the accident, as well as the amount of time between preventable accidents, should be considered for a recommendation for disciplinary action. In all cases, the Sheriff has the final authority and may lessen or increase the recommended sanctions.

9. Remedial Training

- A. In addition to the disciplinary actions set forth above, any deputy involved in a departmental accident determined preventable by the Departmental Accident Review Board will be required to successfully complete defensive driving remedial training as soon as possible after the Departmental Accident Review Board renders their decision.
- B. The defensive driving remedial training may be a course designed by the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT), the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission (MPCTC) or any other defensive driving course deemed appropriate by the Sheriff.
- C. The Sheriff may also require a deputy involved in a departmental accident determined non-preventable by the Departmental Accident Review Board to successfully complete defensive driving remedial training if the Sheriff decides it is in the best interest of the deputy and/or the Sheriff's Office.

10. Restitution

In cases of preventable accidents that involve gross negligence or recklessness, the Sheriff may require the deputy to make restitution for damages sustained. Restitution is not intended as punishment.

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Section 3

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Section 5

Use Seat Belts and Restraining Devices in Sheriff's Office Vehicles

1. Policy

- A. There is available evidence indicating the use of safety belts has a significant effect in reducing the number of deaths and the severity of injuries resulting from traffic accidents, and assisting officers in maintaining the proper control of their patrol vehicles in pursuit and or emergency high speed operations.
- B. While on-duty or off-duty, Sheriff's Office employees operating or riding in patrol vehicles owned by Somerset County Sheriff's Office and/or not owned by Somerset County Sheriff's Office, but being used in an approved official capacity, will utilize those safety restraint devices approved by the manufacturer.
- C. When transporting individuals other than Sheriff's Office personnel in vehicles (specified above), it will be the operators responsibility to ensure that they use this safety equipment. The use of safety restraint equipment for children transported in Sheriff's Office vehicles will be as follows as indicated by the Maryland law.
 - 1) Children 8 years and under in an approved child safety seat.
 - 2) All other children will be secured by seat belt.
 - 3) Child 16 years of age and older will be secured by a seat belt.
- D. Transportation of children less than 4 years of age will be made only when the totality of the circumstances dictate a transport is necessary.

- E. If an approved safety seat is not available for use as specified and emergency transport is appropriate, the child will be transported using any available, suitable seat.
- F. If no seat is available, the child will be transported using the safety equipment provided by the manufacturer for the occupant seated in the center rear seat. If the child is so small that the manufacturers' safety equipment would not be suitable, the transport, in emergency situations, will be made keeping the safety of the child in mind.

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Section 6
Vehicle Equipment Requirements

1. Policy

- A. It shall be the policy of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office that patrol vehicles be utilized for traffic and general patrol assignments and shall be marked and equipped as established herein.

2. Patrol Vehicles

- A. As a general rule, Somerset County Sheriff's Office patrol vehicles will be used for traffic enforcement, general patrol assignments and prisoner transports.
- B. The patrol vehicles may be marked or unmarked as determined by the Sheriff. The marked patrol vehicle will be clearly marked and distinguishable as law enforcement vehicles.
- C. The use of unmarked patrol vehicles may be used for traffic enforcement and general patrol assignments and shall upon special assignment and at the discretion of the Sheriff.

3. Patrol Vehicle Equipment

- A. Somerset County Sheriff's Office vehicles used for traffic enforcement and general patrol assignments will be equipped with the following:

- 1) Fire Extinguisher
- 2) First Aid Kit
- 3) Disposable Blanket
- 4) Audible Siren
- 5) Flashing Emergency Lights
- 6) Public Address System
- 7) Stop Sticks (optional)
- 8) Spotlight (optional)
- 9) Hazardous warning lights
- 10) Mobile radio transceiver

- B. Prior to installing non-approved vehicle equipment on an assigned patrol vehicle, the Deputy will submit a SCSO Form 17 to his/her immediate supervisor requesting to install equipment in their assigned patrol vehicle.
- C. SCSO equipment will not be altered or moved in patrol vehicles unless approved by the Sheriff or his designee.
- D. Additional equipment assigned to the patrol vehicle shall be listed on a SCSO Form 17 and placed in the patrol vehicle's maintenance/service file.

4. Push Bumpers – Standard Operating Procedures

- A. Only Somerset County Sheriff's Office vehicles equipped with push bumpers will be used to push a disabled vehicle.
- B. Verbal consent is required from the owner/operator of the disabled vehicle prior to pushing the vehicle from the traveled portion of the roadway. The owner/operator of the disabled vehicle will be advised that the vehicle's steering and braking functions will require additional physical exertion during the maneuver and all precautions will be taken to avoid damaging the vehicle.

- C. Passenger cars, unloaded pickup trucks, and vans not exceeding three-quarter ton are the only vehicles that may be pushed. A vehicle towing another vehicle or a vehicle in combination with another vehicle may not be pushed using the push bumper.
- D. After receiving authorization from the owner/operator, the Deputy will ensure that the vehicle can be safely pushed from the roadway by performing a cursory check of the vehicle's overall operational condition in addition to the vehicle's steering and braking capabilities.
- E. Prior to pushing a vehicle, the deputy will ensure that the vehicle operator and passengers are utilizing the vehicle's safety restraining devices and the vehicle's transmission is in neutral and the parking/emergency brake is released.
- F. When the above criteria are met for pushing a vehicle, the patrol vehicle will be operated at the lowest speed possible until the push bumper makes contact with the disabled vehicle.
- G. **The operating speed of the patrol vehicle during the pushing maneuver is not to exceed 5 mph.**
- H. All available emergency lighting and four way flashers will be activated.
- I. While pushing the disabled vehicle, the Deputy will place the gearshift selector of the patrol vehicle in the lowest gear possible. Under no circumstances will a vehicle be pushed with the police vehicle's gearshift selector in drive or with the overdrive system activated.
- J. When it becomes necessary to push a disabled vehicle from the traveled portion of the roadway, it will only be pushed as far as necessary to remove it from the traveled portion of the roadway to a safe location.
- K. Whenever a vehicle is removed from the roadway utilizing the push bumper, the Deputy will complete an incident report documenting the incident.
- L. Should damage occur to the other vehicle during this process, it will be documented on an incident report.
- M. If damage occurs to a Somerset County Sheriff's Office vehicle, the Deputy will report the damage in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

N. If the rubber guard on the push bumper is missing or damaged:

- 1) No attempt will be made to push any vehicle; and
- 2) The patrol vehicle operator will immediately request a replacement.

5. In- Car Audio, Video & Digital Recording Equipment

A. In-Car Camera System and Mobile Video Recording (MVR) are synonymous and defined as any recorded media that captures audio and visual signals.

B. The Somerset County Sheriff's Office will be responsible for the installation and maintenance of the audio/video/digital recording equipment.

C. The audio/video/digital recording equipment installed in patrol vehicles includes: recorder, monitor, camera, in-car microphone and a remote microphone.

- 1) The camera equipment automatically records when the vehicle emergency lights are activated.
- 2) A manual override will be installed which will allow the equipment to be turned on without emergency lights being activated. Generally, the camera equipment should be turned off when the emergency lights as turned off.

E. The Sheriff or his designee will ensure that Deputies who are assigned vehicles equipped with MVR equipment use the recording equipment according to Sheriff's Office guidelines.

F. The Sheriff or his designee will designate a corporal/sergeant as the in-car camera supervisor.

G. Deputies assigned to vehicles with MVR equipment installed shall not use the equipment until they have received training in its use and reviewed this policy.

H. The MVR equipment will be used for official business only, consistent with Sheriff's Office policy and procedures.

- I. MVR equipment will be turned on prior to radio transmission to record all traffic stops or contacts with the public.

6. Operating Procedures

- 1) At the beginning of each shift, the assigned Deputy will perform a preoperational inspection to ensure the audio and video on the MVR are performing in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations.
- 2) Any malfunctions shall be reported to his/her immediate supervisor, who will notify the in-car camera supervisor who will make arrangements to have the MVR repaired.
- 3) Deputies will ensure the volume from other electronic devices within the police vehicle such as; AM/FM radios, CD players, etc., are turned off when the MVR is activated, so as not to interfere with the MVR.
- 4) **At the beginning of every recorded traffic stop or public contact, the deputy will notify the people involved that they are being audio/video/digital video that they are being recorded.**
- 5) **Deputies will not stop either audio or video recording until the end of the traffic stop or contact with the public.**
- 6) Deputies are authorized to manually begin or end the recording under the following circumstances:
 - 1) To record the driving performance of a motorist which may provide probable cause for a traffic stop or arrest (DWI, Reckless Driving, etc.
 - 2) To record conversations with witnesses, victims, and suspects or when multiple Somerset County Sheriff's Office vehicles equipped with the digital wireless microphones are at a traffic stop or other incident
 - 3) When Deputies are out of their patrol vehicles on an assignment where a need may exist to utilize the recording capabilities. If feasible the Deputy should advise the parties that they are being audibly recorded.

- 4) Audio/video recording may be stopped during traffic control situations even though the vehicle's emergency lights are in operation. These situations include funerals, traffic direction or emergency scenes when the recording equipment is not needed to capture audio/video evidence. Whenever equipment manually deactivated, Deputies will properly document the reasons for the action by verbally articulating the reason for deactivation on the MVR prior to stopping it.
- 5) Deputies will not erase, reuse, tamper with, or attempt to modify Sheriff's Office tapes or CDs. Any of these infractions shall be cause for disciplinary action as outlined in this manual.
- 6) Deputies will monitor the amount of time that has elapsed for the tape in the audio/video/Digital recorder and, when there are **(30) thirty minutes or less** of recording time remaining on the tape, return to the Somerset County Sheriff's Office for a replacement tape.
- 7) The in-car camera supervisor will download all digital videos from MVR equipment on Friday of each week.

7. Tape and CD Control

- A. The Chief Deputy will ensure there is an adequate supply of cassette tapes and CDs.
- B. Recorded tapes and CDs will be kept in the Somerset County Sheriff's Office Property Room.
- C. Tapes and CDs will be logged on a Somerset County Sheriff's Office Chain of Custody Form 67.

8. Tape and CD Retention

- A. All MVR tapes and CDs will be retained at the Somerset County Sheriff's office for 36 months.
- B. Tapes and CDs are the property of the Somerset County Sheriff's Office and may be duplicated and distributed for official purposes only. Deputies are not authorized to duplicate or distribute recordings.
- C. Tapes held and labeled as evidence will be processed and stored per established procedures concerning seized and recovered evidence.

9. In-car Camera Supervisor Duties

- A. Maintain a file for video reviews.
- B. Randomly select and review vehicle stops conducted by Deputies for quality control purposes.
- C. Reviews will be conducted by the last calendar day of the month or on an as needed basis in the event of an unusual incident.
- D. Report any violations of policies and procedures to the Chief Deputy.

10. Request for Copies of Tapes & CDs.

- A. Requests for videotapes from media, other agencies or individuals will be directed to the County attorney.
- B. A fee of \$50.00 will be charged for copies of tapes produced in response to a written request under the Maryland Public Information Act.
- C. Under no circumstances will the original copy of a video camera tape be released.
- D. All requests for tapes and CDs will be processed under the guidelines indicated in Chapter 7, Section 1, Sub-Section 6.
- E. The In-car camera supervisor will be responsible for duplicating tapes and CDs.

11. Chapter Revisions

- A. General Order 01-10-06 has been revised.
- B. General Order 01-14-06 supersedes General Order 01-10-06.

Robert N. Jones

Sheriff
Somerset County, Maryland