



DEPARTMENT NOTICE

24-143

Published: 09/24/24

Expires: 09/24/27

Mobile Security Units

The purpose of this Department Notice is to provide guidance for the placement and monitoring of Mobile Security Units (MSUs), otherwise known as camera trailers, as well as the storage and release of captured images.

This policy only applies to MSUs and does not apply to any other surveillance technology used by the Department.

Policy

It is the policy of the SFPD to operate MSUs as part of the Department's crime-reduction strategy, to effectively allocate and deploy personnel, and to enhance public safety in public areas. MSUs are strategically placed to act as a high visibility deterrent, to detect and capture criminal activity, and to help safeguard against threats to the public.

In real time, members may access live monitoring, broadcast audio messages, and activate lights and strobes. Members will also have access to historical video and audio footage. The placement and use of MSUs by Department members shall be done in a legal and ethical manner to protect individuals' constitutional right to privacy.

Authorized Use

MSUs may be accessed for legitimate law enforcement purposes. Legitimate law enforcement purposes may include, but are not limited to:

- The prevention, detection, and investigation of crimes.
- The apprehension of individuals.
- Deployment of resources.
- Training, research, and media relations.

Prohibited Use

MSUs may not be used in any of the following ways:

- In any way that violates the law.
- For a non-law enforcement purpose.
- For the purpose of infringing on the lawful exercise of rights protected by the First Amendment.

MSUs will not be intentionally used in any manner as to invade the privacy of individuals or to observe areas where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Access to Footage

The Department will provide members with access to the web-based platform and mobile app to view video footage. Access will be provided on a need-to-know, right-to-know basis.

Pursuant to San Francisco Administrative Code section 96I.2(e)(3), “Department staff (professional staff) may not access any public footage unless a sworn member holding the rank of Captain or higher has determined that access is necessary for an open criminal investigation.”

Administrator privileges such as defining user roles, programing alerts, or push notifications will be managed through the Assistant Chief, Chief of Operations or their designee.

Data Retention

Pursuant to San Francisco Admin Code section 96I.2(e)(3), the Department “must not retain any public footage for longer than 30 days unless a sworn member holding the rank of Captain or higher has determined that a longer retention period is necessary due to an open criminal investigation.”

All downloaded media shall be stored in a secure manner and access shall be limited to authorized personnel. Video evidence obtained for a criminal investigation shall be maintained in accordance with established evidence procedures and shall be appropriately documented.

Transparency in Use of MSUs

The MSU video management system has an audit feature and logs when the system was accessed, and which actions were taken by the user. Such actions may include when the cameras were accessed and that footage was viewed or downloaded.

Data Sharing

1. All Public Records Act requests for data shall be forwarded to and managed by the Legal Division. (SFPD DGO 3.16 Release of Police Reports)
2. Data may be shared with law enforcement partners for law enforcement purposes.
3. Data may be shared with the Department of Police Accountability in accordance with an MOU, Charter authority, state or local law. These requests shall be forwarded to and managed by the Legal Division.
4. Data may be shared with media outlets or on Department social media with the approval of the Chief of Police or in accordance with Media Relations and Legal Division guidelines.
5. Data may be shared with research partners.
6. Data may be shared across different Department technology platforms.

Requests for deployment of MSUs shall be made by contacting the Crime Strategies Unit at 415-837-7290 or via email at sfpd_crimeanalysisunit@sfgov.org.


WILLIAM SCOTT
Chief of Police

Per DN 23-152, all sworn & non-sworn members shall electronically acknowledge this Department document in PowerDMS within (30) thirty calendar days of issuance. Members whose duties are relevant to this document shall be held responsible for compliance. Any questions regarding this policy should be sent to sfpd.writtendirectives@sfgov.org who will provide additional information.