

Georgia Department of Public Safety

Policy Manual

SUBJECT PHOTOGRAPHS	POLICY NUMBER 12.04
DISTRIBUTION ALL EMPLOYEES	REVISED DATE 2/11/2021
	POLICY REVIEWED 2/11/2021

12.04.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for photographing traffic crashes, crime scenes, and other significant incidents members may encounter during the course of patrol duty. This policy also establishes guidelines for storage and retention of photographs.

12.04.2 Policy

It shall be the policy of the Georgia Department of Public Safety to collect evidence and documenting Departmental activities via extensive use of photography and photographs.

12.04.3 Procedures

- A. Members who perform traffic or criminal investigations during the course of their assigned duties shall photograph a crash scene when there is a serious injury or fatal crash or when, in the member's opinion, photographic evidence will be needed to assist in the reconstruction or prosecution related to the crash. Members who investigate crime scenes shall take photographs as deemed necessary in the course of their duty.
- B. All photographs related to a crime or crash investigation shall be labeled and processed as evidence. Evidence is governed by the Evidence and Property Policy #12.01.
- C. All photographs, audio/video recordings, reports, and any other materials, generated or obtained during the course of any crash and/or criminal investigation may not be sold, disposed of, disseminated or otherwise released, except in accordance with the provisions of law, Open Records Policy #13.01, Mobile Video/Audio Recording Policy #12.03 and the Evidence and Property Policy #12.01.
- D. Members are prohibited from selling or releasing photographs, made in conjunction with the performance of their official duties, whether such materials were produced using Department or personally owned equipment and supplies.
- E. All photographs made with personally owned equipment during the course of official state business shall be governed by the guidelines of this policy, including processing and dissemination; however, the Department discourages the use of a member's personal equipment, with the availability of Departmental equipment.

- F. Members who receive photographs in connection with a crash or incident shall upload photographs to the DPS Photo Library.
- G. All photographs at DPS Headquarters shall be retained in accordance with the DPS retention schedule. The DPS retention schedule is maintained and disseminated annually by the Records Management Officer.
- H. Digital images shall be uploaded to the DPS Photo Library within five business days after the report is complete. They shall be uploaded and organized in a digital folder, according to the following sequential steps:
 - 1. Post/Region/Unit
 - 2. Year
 - 3. Crash number (ex. C000435726)
- I. Requests for copies of the digital images shall be routed to the Open Records Unit. Guidelines established in this policy and the Open Records Policy #13.01 shall govern the release of photographs. The same fees shall be charged as stated in the Open Records Fees Exhibit #13.01-1.
- J. Digital images shall be treated as evidence and governed by the Evidence and Property Policy #12.01 and this policy.