



MYRTLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS & OPERATING PROCEDURES

Subject: Handheld Thermal Imaging Camera

Number: 267-B

Effective Date: February 7, 2012

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Rescinds: 267 - *Handheld Thermal Imaging Camera*
267-A *Handheld Thermal Imaging Camera*

Dated: February 7, 2012
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Approved By:

I. DISCUSSION

The Myrtle Beach Police Department has acquired a Handheld Thermal Imaging Camera (FLIR H-Series), which is designed to aid law enforcement officers while in the capacity of their official duties in low light and concealed situations. It is important that each officer using this equipment be familiar with its components, potentials, and limitations. Officers should be able to trouble shoot technical problems if and when they occur while in use.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Handheld Thermal Imaging Camera: Specialized equipment that enhances a thermal image/signature where low light or vision is available, which improves the officer's vision capability.
- B. Qualified Persons: Officers that have been identified as having a high probability of benefiting from the use of a handheld thermal imaging camera.
- C. Training Qualifications: Established training standards that must be successfully achieved by an individual officer prior to being allowed to use a handheld thermal imaging camera.

III. PROCEDURE

A. TRAINING

- A. An approved lesson plan outlining the nomenclature, proper use of and limitations of the handheld thermal imaging camera will be used to train and qualify officers to use the handheld thermal imaging camera. Those officers being identified as qualified persons must attend and successfully complete a training class specifically designated to the use of the handheld thermal imaging camera.

B. SELECTION

- 1. Those officers who are interested and capable, once trained, shall be able to carry and deploy the handheld thermal imaging camera.

C. STORAGE/SECURITY

- 1. The handheld thermal imaging camera will be stored and maintained by the canine Unit. A canine officer will be responsible for signing the handheld thermal imaging camera in and out, when used by personnel from another unit, and maintaining a log with the following information (without exception): the name of the officer using the equipment, the time and date of the unit was signed in and out. The canine supervisor will also be responsible for inspecting and documenting the condition of the handheld thermal imaging camera upon return. The sign-out log will be maintained by the canine unit supervisor.
- 2. Handheld thermal imaging camera will be subject to an annual audit by the Office of Professional Standards.

IV. MAINTENANCE

- A. The canine unit supervisors will be responsible for ensuring that the handheld thermal imaging camera is being maintained properly. Each time the handheld thermal imaging camera is signed back in after use, a visual and operational inspection of the equipment shall be completed. If the equipment doesn't work properly and is in need of repair, immediate notification will be made to the division lieutenant. Once this notification is made, it shall be the responsibility of that lieutenant to send the equipment off for repair once approved by the division captain.

V. USE & DEPLOYMENT

- A. The handheld thermal imaging camera is designed to be utilized in low light situations and situations where a subject may be concealed in foliage, darkness, or other means of cover/concealment. The primary function is to afford the user the ability to see in total darkness or through camouflage/foliage to the point where the user can take action, make decisions and move with a higher degree of safety.
- B. Primary use for the handheld thermal imaging camera is to enhance vision operations in low light conditions and situations to which a subject may be concealed. These types of operations include but are not limited to:

1. K-9 tracks and searches
 2. Narcotics investigations
 3. Burglary investigations and alarm calls
 4. Wanted persons and tracking a suspect's movements
 5. Following up/corroborating intelligence in an on-going investigation
 6. Missing person searches
 7. Any situation in which a handheld thermal imaging camera can be a valuable resource in enhancing operations in low light conditions
- C. Tactical application for the SWAT team varies a great deal from day-to-day operations. For this reason, the SWAT team may expand the use of the handheld thermal imaging camera as the situation dictates, such as a covert entry into a dwelling, which is the target of the operation. However, when this happens, approval must be given from the team leader on scene and approval shall be, in part, based on specific training, related to the intended use.
- D. When the handheld thermal imaging camera is used in the field, the officer who utilized the camera shall submit a utilization report to the lieutenant of their respective unit within 24 hours from the utilization time. The unit lieutenant shall be responsible for reviewing the data, which will aid in enhancing the utilization of the camera as applicable. Once reviewed, the unit lieutenant will forward the information to their division commander.

VI. FIREARMS RELATED ISSUES

- A. The use of a handheld thermal imaging camera in conjunction with a firearm is extremely difficult, and for this reason it is highly discouraged, unless the officer has no other option, the use of deadly force is justified and the officer's actions are in-line with departmental regulation governing the use of deadly force.
- B. When deploying the handheld thermal imaging camera, the officer operating the camera will have a secondary officer with them to provide cover for the officer while they are operating the camera.