



Purpose:

The purpose of this guideline is to manage the use of Fire Helmet Cameras by fire district personnel in accordance with state law in such a way that the privacy rights of department personnel, patients, fire victims, and the public are respected; that evidentiary concerns related to such images are protected; that the state's public records law is complied with; and the professional image of the department is maintained.

Scope:

This SOG/SOP will discuss the benefits, operation, use, function, maintenance, permission, and consent aspects of the fire helmet camera.

Benefits:

The obvious benefits of the fire helmet camera are varied and numerous. As a reliable recall device, the fire helmet camera is an incredibly valuable training and reporting tool of the fire service.

Critique:

A million and one things are going on at the same time on a fire scene. It has been said that the first fifteen minutes of a fire reduces the life span of a firefighter by a forty-hour workweek. Fire department scene critiques are the best way to identify all of the aspects of a call and make changes as to the efficiencies of operations and techniques. Critiques can be greatly enhanced by the fire helmet camera. Company officers can go step by step through a call. All members of the company have the opportunity to see items that otherwise they may have not had the opportunity to see while on scene (i.e. illegal wiring, hazardous situations, conditions at other points of view, and other items of interest).

Quality Assurance/Improvement:

Using the fire helmet camera during a critique offers a quality assurance/improvement aspect similar to the written report of an EMS call. This quality assurance/improvement aspect is designed to better the fire district as a whole. It is not intended to be a disciplinary tool, but a learning tool. Identified risks and close calls are to be shared by all members of this department and by the fire service as a whole.

Training:

Fire district officers may use the fire helmet camera on a recruit going through training mazes while vision is obscured. After the exercise the student can see items missed during primary and secondary search. Training videos can be created from the videos obtained by the fire helmet camera and used over and over to train others. The fire helmet camera may be used on all training events.

Recruitment:

The fire helmet camera will allow potential recruits to see what a real fire looks like. There is no Hollywood special effect or props.

Tactics and Strategy:

Using the fire helmet camera to review fore ground tactics and strategy can improve overall operations. The camera will also provide a review of fire behavior and its response to applied fire control methods.

Operation:

The operation of the fire helmet camera will follow manufacturer recommendations. Only batteries recommended by the manufacturer will be used.

Use:

Use of the fire helmet camera shall not delay any fire suppression or rescue activities. The fire helmet camera may be used time permitting on responses except for EMS only calls and direct patient care.

Function:

The function of the fire helmet camera is to provide video and audio documentation of fire and rescue scenes. These recordings will serve as reliable recall of the events of an emergency incident.

Maintenance:

The fire helmet camera should be cleaned with water and a mild soap. If the outer housing of the camera is damaged it should be replaced.

Permission:

The following are the permitted items concerning the use of the fire helmet camera.

Required/Allowed or Permitted:

The fire helmet camera is permitted by members of this department for all incidents except for direct patient care during an EMS only response.

Posting, Uploading, or Emailing Video on the Internet:

All video content is the sole property of the Pacific Fire Protection District. Its intent is for educational and training purposes. No person may share or distribute without the express written consent of the Fire Chief. Video content will be reviewed by the fire chief or his/her designee before being posted, uploaded, or emailed. Any agency requesting a copy of the video shall follow the fire district request for report guidelines.

HIPPA/Privacy Requirements:

The fire helmet camera may not be used to video or record private medical information or records. Patient care or other private and/or personal information shall not be disseminated with the aid of the fire helmet camera.

Rescue Calls:

The fire helmet camera may be used on rescue scenes. If the fire helmet camera inadvertently records a patient care event such as a rescue, the fire chief will have the last say in the use or purpose of the video.

Eavesdropping/Illegal Activities:

The fire helmet camera shall not be used for any illegal activities such as eavesdropping, listening to, or recording private conversations.

Consent:

A patient may give consent for a video of a rescue or other emergency event to be used in training, education, or any other usage desired by the fire department.

Pacific Fire Protection District Video Usage Consent Form

I, _____ (print name) give consent to the Pacific Fire Protection District to use the video obtained on ____/____/____. I understand that I will not be compensated in any way for the use of this video. The video may be used for training, education, recruitment, uploading, downloading, or other uses as the department sees fit.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

FD Rep: _____

Date: _____