



Sheridan Police Department  
Policies and Procedures  
20.5  
Chapter 20 – Investigations  
Section 5 – Surveillance

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Signature:

Surveillance is an important investigative method and at times may be essential to detecting and prosecuting criminal cases. All surveillance operations are to be conducted in a manner that will not infringe on the statutory or constitutional rights of any individual.

### 20.5.1 Purpose

Surveillance will only be used to collect information for legitimate law enforcement purposes.

### 20.5.2 Types of Surveillance

The type of surveillance used is dependent upon the type of information to be collected and/or the type of criminal activity. Levels of surveillance include:

- A. Casual surveillance is generally informal, such as a drive-by of a location of interest;
- B. Formal surveillance which is conducted for an extended period of hours or days;
- C. Long-term surveillance which is conducted on an ongoing basis; and
- D. Electronic surveillance which is conducted through mechanical monitoring equipment.
- E. Any type of surveillance beyond casual shall be authorized by a supervisor and documented in an incident report.

### 20.5.3 Planning

Planning is an integral part of surveillance activity. The individual designated as being responsible for the surveillance is responsible for each of the following:

- A. Crime Analysis  
The type of crimes involved, elements necessary to prove that a crime has occurred, and varying methods of investigation need to be examined.
- B. Analysis of Suspect  
Information needs to be gathered concerning the suspect. This includes information on:
  - 1. Identification of suspects, or ways to identify suspects if their identities are not known;
  - 2. Associates and their level of involvement;
  - 3. Residence and business addresses;
  - 4. Locations the suspect is known to frequent;
  - 5. Vehicles;
  - 6. Method of operation;
  - 7. Past criminal involvement; and
  - 8. Suspected degree of involvement in crime currently being investigated.
- C. Site Reconnaissance  
Aerial photographs, reconnaissance photographs, plat maps, and drive-bys are methods used to familiarize officers with the area in which the surveillance is to be conducted.

D. Personnel

The number of officers involved depends upon the circumstances and length of the surveillance. Officer safety is a primary concern as well as effectiveness of the operation. More officers are required when dealing with individuals suspected of being armed, with a history of violence, or committing crimes with a high potential for violence. The number of officers involved must be balanced with the overall needs of the department.

E. Operational Procedures

The most secure method of communication should be utilized for surveillance.

The department realizes that surveillance involves certain risks and officers are expected to use good judgment and weigh the risks to themselves and the public against the possible benefit.

F. Briefing

All formal, long term or electronic surveillances require a formal briefing. Legal requirements and restrictions on surveillance are discussed with the appropriate prosecutor, if necessary, and reviewed at the briefing.

#### **20.5.4 Equipment**

A. The department may use different types of equipment for surveillance.

B. The department is committed to assisting other law enforcement agencies whenever possible. Equipment shall be made available for use by requesting law enforcement agencies with approval from the duty administrator. Considerations in granting approval include:

1. Department need for the equipment;
2. Ability of the borrowing agency to use and care for the equipment; and
3. Knowledge of the borrowing agency on legal uses of the equipment.

#### **20.5.5 Use of Equipment**

A. Employees shall use department equipment and property only for its intended purpose, in accordance with procedures, and shall not negligently or purposely abuse, damage, destroy or lose department equipment.

B. Any surveillance involving the interception of oral communications, placement of covert surveillance cameras or electronic tracking devices requires prior approval of a supervisor.

C. The supervisor authorizing the use of the surveillance equipment is responsible for ensuring the following:

1. The methods utilized are lawful and do not violate constitutional guarantees or statutory provisions;
2. The date and time of the equipment's use is properly recorded; and
3. The equipment is returned and secured.

D. All matters concerning electronic surveillance should be treated as confidential, to be disclosed on a strict need to know basis.

#### **20.5.6 Information Specific to Tracking Devices**

A. Tracking devices will only be used on active cases.

B. Use of tracking devices will be coordinated through the Special Operations Lieutenant.

C. A search warrant is required for the installation of an electronic tracking device. This shall be limited to attachment to the exterior of objects or vehicles.

D. Installations shall occur on vehicles parked on a public roadway, or when parked in a public parking lot or where the suspect leaves the object or vehicle in an area accessible to the public and has no justifiable expectation of privacy.

#### **20.5.7 Information Specific to Audio Recording**

Wyoming Statute 7-3-702(b)(iv) requires consent to record be obtained from one party to the conversation.