



Lexington Police Department

Lexington, Kentucky

SPECIAL ORDER

BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

S.O. 2006-02

Thermal Imager Procedure

Rescinds: NA

References: CALEA Chapter(s)

Effective Date: 04/13/06

Distribution Code: B | All Department Employees

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Special Order is to outline the use of hand-held thermal imaging devices by sworn personnel.

II. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Division of Police to use hand-held thermal imaging devices in accordance with this directive, manufacturer's specifications, and case law. Only thermal imaging equipment calibrated for law enforcement is authorized.

III. EQUIPMENT DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Thermal imagers detect infrared energy or heat from the surfaces of those objects at which they are directed (e.g., persons, animals, plants, and any other object capable of generating or reflecting infrared energy or heat). Thermal imagers do not require a light source. They will not, and therefore cannot, be employed to detect heat energy sources (e.g., "looking through a structure"). Thermal imagers are surface detection devices only.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Thermal imaging equipment must be issued and used for law enforcement purposes only. Imagers cannot be distributed to a non-sworn member of the agency or to the public. With the exception of the ERU commander in tactical situations, authorization to use a hand-held imager shall be documented by a supervisor in a surveillance equipment log maintained by the Bureau controlling the equipment. The log shall include the date and time signed out, issuing supervisor, name of the qualified sworn person it was issued to, and the date and time signed in. Only personnel that have been trained on the use of thermal imaging devices may use one. Training shall be documented in Training Section records.

B. Approved Uses of Thermal Imaging Equipment are:

1. Search and Rescue
2. Fugitive Searches
3. Crime Scene Evidence Detection

4. Vehicle Pursuits
5. Flight Safety
6. Ground Surveillance
7. Perimeter Surveillance
8. Officer Safety
9. Structure Profiles
10. Environmental Law Enforcement, and
11. Hidden Compartments in Vehicles.

V. CASE DEVELOPEMNT

The use of thermal imaging equipment shall be in accordance with this written directive and current case law. Thermal surveillance cannot be used as the sole justification for obtaining a search warrant. It is incumbent on equipment users to remain familiar with current case law concerning the admissibility of thermal image evidence under different applications by consulting the Law Enforcement Thermographer's Association web site (www.leta.org).