



# COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

*"Policing Excellence through Community Partnerships"*

<b>Directive Type:</b> General Order	<b>Effective Date:</b> 03-17-2021	<b>General Order Number:</b> 02.08
<b>Subject:</b> <i>Use of Thermal Imaging Devices</i>		
<b>Amends/Supersedes:</b> <i>New</i>	<b>Chief of Police:</b>	
<b>Distribution:</b> All Personnel	<b>Review Date:</b> <i>July 1</i>	<b># of Pages:</b> 3

## 1.0 PURPOSE

This directive is intended to provide Columbia Police Department (CPD) personnel with guidance on when it is permissible to use department issued thermal imaging equipment. This equipment will only be utilized by personnel trained in its use, and in applications deemed acceptable by department policy and in accordance with State and Federal laws.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

**Thermal Imaging Devices (TID):** TID are infrared equipment designed to detect heat variations among objects in front of it, to produce an image indicating the presence of heat producing sources. TIDs are most effective in low-light environments.

**Dwelling:** any building or structure, or part thereof, used and occupied for human habitation or intended to be so used and includes any outhouses and appurtenances belonging thereto or usually enjoyed therewith.

**Curtilage:** the area immediately surrounding a residence that harbors the intimate activity associated with the sanctity of a person's home and the privacies of life.' In determining curtilage, the following factors should be considered:

- (1) the proximity of the area to the home
- (2) whether the area is within an enclosure surrounding the home
- (3) the nature and uses to which the area is put
- (4) the steps taken by the resident to protect the area from observation by passersby

**Open Field:** an area having no restricted access, is open to public view, and it outside the curtilage.

### 3.0 USE OF THERMAL IMAGING DEVICES (TIDs):

1. The Columbia Police Department (CPD) provided TIDs will be utilized by CPD trained personnel, in support of official police business (to include CPD training). TIDS will be used for “surface detection” of heat variations, and will only be utilized in accordance with all departmental policies and directives, as well as State and Federal law.
2. The point of observation, from where the TID operator stands, should be from a public vantage point, or other area where the operator has a right to be. The target area under surveillance should generally be an open field, or other area open to public view. If TIDs are to be used for “intrusive searches” of dwellings, curtilage, or other constitutionally protected areas of privacy (e.g. searching for heat signatures inside a dwelling or private structure suspected of an illegal marijuana grow operation), then a search warrant will be required.
3. When a search warrant is required by law, and no warrant exception exists (e.g. exigent circumstances, consensual searches, and search incident to arrest), the TIDs should then only be utilized after a search warrant is signed by an authorized judge.
4. When TIDs are used in accordance with this policy, they can potentially allow our officers to search for and locate threats, such as hidden suspects, dogs, or other dangerous obstacles, without being seen by, or exposing themselves, to these threats.
5. Consistent with the above guidance, CPD issued TIDs can be utilized in the below law enforcement applications (list is not all inclusive):

#### 3.1 Authorized Applications:

1. **Locating Ballistic Evidence:** firearms and expended cartridge casings may emit heat signatures that will allow them to be detected by TIDs. When being used in accordance with policy, TIDs can be used by trained CPD personnel responding to shooting scenes, to possibly aid in the location and seizure of ballistic evidence.
2. **Search and Rescue:** the human body emits heat in the form of infrared energy. TIDs can be utilized to search for and locate lost or missing persons. The TIDs can offer the ability to quickly search large areas for heat signatures for people, animals, and disturbed earth/surfaces.
3. **Fugitive Apprehension:** similar to the deployment in search and rescue missions, TIDs can be effective in searching large areas for suspects and fugitives, while improving officer safety by limiting their exposure to the suspects. Once suspects are located, officers can devise a plan to safely take the suspect into custody.
4. **Perimeter Surveillance:** when used in accordance with policy, TIDs can be utilized to establish perimeter surveillance to detect human heat signatures, especially in low-light environments, that may improve the surveillance team’s situational awareness and officer

safety.

### 3.2 Unauthorized Applications

1. Officers will not allow unauthorized persons to use a thermal imaging device.
2. Officers will not use a thermal imaging device while operating a motor vehicle in motion.
3. Officers will not use a thermal imaging device for personal use.

### 4.0 EQUIPMENT TRAINING ISSUE AND RESPONSIBILITY:

1. TIDs will be issued and assigned to trained CPD personnel. The receiving personnel will sign for this equipment, acknowledge the CPD policy governing the use of TIDs, will be accountable for the care and maintenance of the TIDs, and will not transfer the TIDs to other CPD personnel who aren't trained in the equipment's use.
2. The TID operator shall maintain a running log of each instance the TID is use, that will document the serial number of the TID, the date, time, and CPD incident number for which it was used, and the result of the deployment (e.g. if a suspect or evidence was located).
3. Training will be conducted within PowerDMS for certification. No re-certification is required.

### 5.0 RECORDING TID VIDEOS AND IMAGES

1. Most of the CPD issued TIDs have the capability of recording images and/or video. When operating a recording-capable TID to scan and/or search, in accordance with this policy, it is highly recommended that the operator record the images/video to the TID memory card. If recordings are made, they should be readily transferred to a CD/DVD, and then the CD/DVD should be packaged as evidence under the CPD incident number, and then submitted to, and preserved by, the CPD Evidence Unit, as prescribed by State law.

### 6.0 REQUESTS FOR USE OF TIDs:

1. Any CPD officer may request that a CPD trained TID operator be deployed to the scene of an incident within, or originating within, Columbia's jurisdiction.
2. TIDs will generally be made available to on-duty CPD Watch Commanders, designated points of contact within each patrol region, and the CPD's Crime Gun Intel Unit.