I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide members of the Harford County Sheriff's Office with procedures and guidelines for recording and storage of digital images.

II. POLICY

The Harford County Sheriff's Office recognizes the importance of properly recording, storing and preserving digital images for evidentiary purposes. Therefore, Agency members shall strictly adhere to procedures and guidelines set forth in this policy to ensure that the integrity of digital images is not compromised.
Harford County Sheriff’s Office
Policy #MAN4100: Digital Images

4100.1 Digital Images General
4100.1.1 Agency members shall only use Agency issued equipment/devices to capture images.
4100.1.2 If photographs, digital images or videos are taken at a crime scene, this information shall be included in the report narrative.
4100.1.3 All photographs, digital images or videos taken at a crime scene shall be handled as evidence.
4100.1.4 Exception: In exigent circumstances, when evidence may be lost or destroyed, members, at their discretion, may use personal equipment/devices to preserve evidence.
4100.1.4.1 If members use their personal equipment/devices to preserve evidence, they shall notify:
4100.1.4.2 Their immediate supervisor.
4100.1.4.3 The Digital Image Manager, who will transfer the image(s) to an Agency media device for evidentiary storage before deleting the image(s) from the member’s device.
4100.1.5 Members should be mindful that personal equipment/devices and its contents (e.g. media or SIM card, etc.) could be admissible in court and subject to the rules of discovery.

4100.2 Digital Images Procedures
4100.2.1 The photographer shall submit all digital images on the original storage media within 3 working days, directly to the Digital Image Manager for archive and permanent storage, utilizing the Digital Image Submission Envelope or the images shall be directly uploaded by the photographer using the Digital Images Uploader Program.
4100.2.2 The Digital Image Manager shall transfer the images to the Digital Images Server and create backup CD/DVD within 10 working days.
4100.2.2.1 The original storage media shall be erased and may be reused.
4100.2.3 No digital image shall be erased, deleted or overwritten until an exact digital copy has been stored on “Write Once” CDR disks or DVD disks for permanent storage purposes.
4100.2.3.1 The original mini-CDR shall be used for this purpose whenever possible.
4100.2.4 For cameras using compact flash media cards, floppy disks or other storage media, the original images shall be transferred to CD/DVD or uploaded to the Digital Images Server before the original image is deleted or overwritten.
4100.2.5 The Digital Image Manager shall make all digital images in a case available on the computer network for review by the investigator and other interested parties.
4100.2.6 In those instances where images are of sensitive or confidential nature, the Digital Image Manager shall take steps to restrict the viewing rights of those images.
4100.3 Digital Images Guidelines

4100.3.1 In order to ensure images are associated with the correct CC number only photographs related to one (1) criminal investigation shall be included on a single media card or uploaded at a time using the Digital Images Uploader Program.

4100.3.2 For cameras using compact flash cards, 2 extra flash cards shall be purchased/issued with each digital camera.

4100.3.3 For cameras using mini-C DR disks or floppy disks, only 1 case should be imaged on a single CDR disk and multiple CDR disks or floppies may be used on the same case.

4100.3.4 Erased media shall be returned to the photographer after the images are transferred to CDR.

4100.3.5 Deputies may use the Digital Images Uploader Program to directly upload their images to a temporary storage location on the Digital Images server, and after verifying the images have been successfully uploaded, erase and ready their camera card for re-use without physically submitting the card to the Digital Images Manager.

4100.3.6 Digital images shall be retained on the Harford County Sheriff's Office Computer network for a period of three (3) years, and shall be retained for a period of fifty (50) years.