



# LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

**NUMBER:** 1771  
**TOPIC:** ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE & CRIME STOPPERS  
**ISSUED BY:** JEFF BLIEMEISTER, CHIEF OF POLICE  
**DATE:** 1-1-2020  
**SUPERSEDES:** G.O. 1771, 2019  
**REFERENCE:**

## I. POLICY

The Lincoln Police Department participates in the national Crime Stoppers program. A civilian board of directors coordinates the local program that provides an avenue for community members to anonymously report information on active cases and suspects.

The Lincoln Police Department solely maintains a 'Crime Stoppers' website and other social media accounts for the purposes of identifying persons of interest and sharing information with the public. Photographic and video evidence posted to the Crime Stoppers website and other social media websites will follow strict guidelines.

## II. PROCEDURES

### A. Officers Responsibilities

1. When officers collect electronic evidence (i.e. video, photographs, images) from businesses or individuals:
  - a. The original electronic evidence should be obtained.
    - (1) A 'Video Surveillance Evidence Form' can be located in the Forms Library to assist officers, a business or individual in obtaining complete information for electronic evidence analysis.
    - (2) If assistance is needed to download the electronic evidence, an ACI should be sent to the Forensic ID Unit and be specifically marked as 'Priority Request for Video Capture Assistance'.
  - b. Officers will tag the digital media containing the electronic evidence into the Property Unit, and:
    - (1) Place a completed copy of the 'Video Surveillance Evidence Form' Document in the Records Unit, or document within an ACI the following:
      - (a) The name of the person who downloaded the electronic evidence; and
      - (b) The name of the person giving the electronic evidence to the officer, if different; and if applicable,
      - (c) Any date or time discrepancy from that electronic evidence.
2. It is the investigating officer's responsibility to review all electronic evidence prior to submittal for analysis, or posting to the public. There are designated computers located in the main station and substations for viewing video. The Forensic ID Unit can assist officers in viewing the video.
3. In cases where the only evidence available is a screen shot or JPEGs, officers can send the images and request in an ACI for the Forensic ID Unit to create a composite. Officer should continue try to obtain a copy of the original electronic evidence unless it is no longer available for download.
4. To request video or facial similarity analysis, composite, and/or to post on Crime Stoppers or other social media, the officer will:
  - a. Document confirmation of the suspect's image in an ACI unless the officer is unable to view the electronic evidence.
  - b. Send an ACI requesting assistance to the Forensic ID Unit. The officer should ensure the following is documented on the 'Video Surveillance Form' or in the ACI:
    - (1) Case number(s);
    - (2) Type of offense;
    - (3) Date and time of offense and, if applicable, any time or date discrepancy in the video;
    - (4) Victim(s) name and address;
    - (5) Location video was obtained;
    - (6) The name of the person who downloaded the video;

- (7) The name of the person giving the video evidence to the officer;
  - (8) The name of the person confirming the suspects(s) in the video;
  - (9) Brief synopsis of the case;
  - (10) Type of analysis requested:
    - (a) Video analysis,
    - (b) Facial similarity,
    - (c) Composite, and/or
    - (d) Posting to Crime Stoppers or social media.
  - (11) Description of the suspect(s) or items to be analyzed.
5. If an officer requested image(s) be posted on Crime Stoppers or approved social media, the officer will send an ACI to the Forensic ID Unit when the case is cleared, suspect has been identified, or the image(s) needs to be removed. The ACI should document:
- a. The case has been cleared;
  - b. The suspect(s) has been identified;
  - c. The need to remove the image as it is no longer of evidentiary value; or
  - d. There is an error or omission within the posting.
    - (1) If the wrong individual was posted, the ACI shall be marked as 'Priority'.
    - (2) If on a weekend, an officer becomes aware that the wrong person was posted, the officer shall immediately notify the Duty Commander for immediate removal.
    - (3) The ACI shall contain the following:
      - (a) Explanation of the reason for the request to remove;
      - (b) If due to error or omission, how the employee became aware of the error or omission; and
      - (c) Steps taken to notify the department of the need to remove.

**B. Forensics ID Unit Responsibilities**

- 1. Upon receipt of an ACI requesting assistance, an employee will make a copy of the original evidence. All analyses will be performed on the copy.
- 2. The employee will create a history log of all clarification techniques used.
- 3. Employees may store the image(s) on the Unit's shared drives as evidence, or if on a DVD/CD, checked into the Property Unit. If image(s) are stored on the Unit's shared drives, the employee will document storage location in an ACI.
- 4. For facial similarity analysis requests, the employee will document on an ACI if the

- image was of value and if an image was submitted for facial similarity to DMV.
- 5. The employee will document results of the examination in an ACI that is forwarded to the investigating officer.
- 6. Once the suspect's image has been confirmed by the officer, the employee may make the image available to the Education & Personnel Unit for posting to Crime Stoppers or approved social media, if necessary.
- 7. Upon notification of a cleared case or identified suspect, the Forensic ID Unit manager or designee will ensure the Crime Stoppers website will be updated to reflect "case cleared" or "suspect identified", which acts as notification to the Crime Stoppers' tipster that a reward may be available.
- 8. Upon notification of a request to remove image(s) from Crime Stoppers or approved social media, the Forensic ID Unit Manager or assigned employee shall be responsible to:
  - a. Review the request; and
  - b. Make a determination on removal.
    - (1) If there is no need to remove, the reviewing employee will document the review process and determination in an ACI.
    - (2) If there is a need to remove the image from Crime Stoppers, the Forensic ID Unit Manager shall:
      - (a) Notify the assigned employee(s) in the Forensic ID Unit and Education & Personnel Unit, and Public Information Officer for the image(s) to be removed from approved social media.
      - (b) The Manager and/or assigned employee shall follow the steps for post removal contained in this General Order.

**C. Education & Personnel Unit Responsibilities and Other Approved Social Media User Responsibilities**

- 1. The chief has approved the creation of a Crime Stoppers website and several social media accounts, and has also approved individual users of these accounts on behalf of the department.
  - a. The general use and maintenance of the Crime Stoppers website is assigned to the Education & Personnel Unit Manger and approved users from within that Unit.
  - b. Management of passwords and creation of social media accounts and rules is assigned to the Public Information

- Officer. Approved users of these accounts shall follow the rules created by the Public Information Officer.
2. Prior to posting images from electronic evidence, the approved user will:
    - a. Confirm that no arrests have been made or the suspect has not already been identified;
    - b. Confirm the case has been sufficiently investigated to warrant a need to post the image(s) on Crime Stoppers or approved social media;
    - c. Confirm the image of the suspect from reviewing the case file and viewing of the image;
    - d. Review the image to determine if the image is of sufficient quality to elicit public input;
    - e. Contact the investigating officer if more information needed;
  3. The approved user may post images from electronic evidence on Crime Stoppers and/or approved social media. The approved user will:
    - a. Document the posting in an ACI under the case file;
    - b. Use only correct spelling and grammar on Crime Stoppers, and attempt to do so on approved social media. No slang terms and acronyms shall be used in any posting;
    - c. Not refer to persons within the image as suspects or create a post pre-determining guilt of the person in the image.
    - d. Post images from electronic evidence to social media by way of a link to Crime Stoppers, when available, rather than uploading a separate image.
    - e. After six months, the approved user is responsible for removing posts from Crime Stopper, Crime Stopper links, or separately uploaded images from electronic evidence. The chief can authorize a posting to continue longer than six months, on a case by case basis. No documentation of regular maintenance and removal is required.
2. If any employee becomes aware of images that need to be removed from Crime Stoppers or approved social media sites due to an error or omission within the posting, the employee will:
    - a. Immediately send an ACI to the Forensic ID Unit and be marked as 'Priority'
      - (1) If on a weekend, an officer becomes aware that the wrong person was posted, the officer shall also immediately notify the Duty Commander for removal.
    - b. The ACI shall contain the following:
      - (1) Explanation of the reason for the request to remove;
      - (2) If due to error or omission, how the employee became aware of the error,
      - (3) Steps taken to notify the department of the need to remove.
  3. Immediately upon notice of the need to remove a post, the Forensic Unit and/or Education & Personnel assigned staff, the Public Information Office and/or assigned social media user shall:
    - a. Immediately print a copy of the post and place in the case file;
    - b. Immediately remove the post(s) from public view;
    - c. Document in an ACI the following:
      - (1) Date, time, and person who removed the post;
      - (2) Steps taken to remove the post from public view, to include attempts to contact media outlets who have reposted the image.
    - d. Notify the Legal Advisor to determine if a retraction is necessary. A retraction, if needed, shall be made by the approved user within twenty (20) days of notification of the error.

#### D. Removal of Post Due to Errors or Omissions

1. Removal of a post or blog on Crime Stoppers means placing the post or blog in "draft mode". Removal of a post from an approved social media account shall mean the post is deleted, but will be preserved through third party software for public records retention.