

CAPTURING CCTV EVIDENCE

This guide has been prepared with the assistance of the Metropolitan Police on West Area BCU to help you assist them in using CCTV imagery captured on your domestic CCTV System.

It is important to note that Metropolitan Police guidelines mean that an officer can only review CCTV footage if the time of the crime can be identified to within a 20 minute time window – therefore, as a resident, if you can identify an exact time on your footage that an event is captured, this means that the crime will not automatically be “screened out” (closed) due to the 20-minute rule.

OVERVIEW

The process of preparing evidence captured on your home CCTV system or video doorbell can be broken down into the following steps:

- 1. Establish the accuracy of the CCTV timestamp**
- 2. Identify the camera(s) which captured the event**
- 3. Identify the timeframe to be downloaded**
- 4. Download the footage onto media**
- 5. Complete a short Witness Statement (MG11)**
- 6. Hand the exhibit and MG11 over to the Police**

DETAILS OF EACH STEP

1. Establish the accuracy of the CCTV timestamp

- 1.1. Ensure that the date/time on the CCTV system is checked against an accurate time source such as the speaking clock (BT: 123) or online atomic clock, as sometimes CCTV times are not accurate. Record the time difference on the proforma MG11 statement supplied.

2. Identify the camera(s) which captured the event

- 2.1. You must download all of the relevant cameras that capture the suspect / incident.
- 2.2. You should also include cameras that do not capture the event if those cameras prove that a suspect did not go in a certain direction passing that camera, for example.

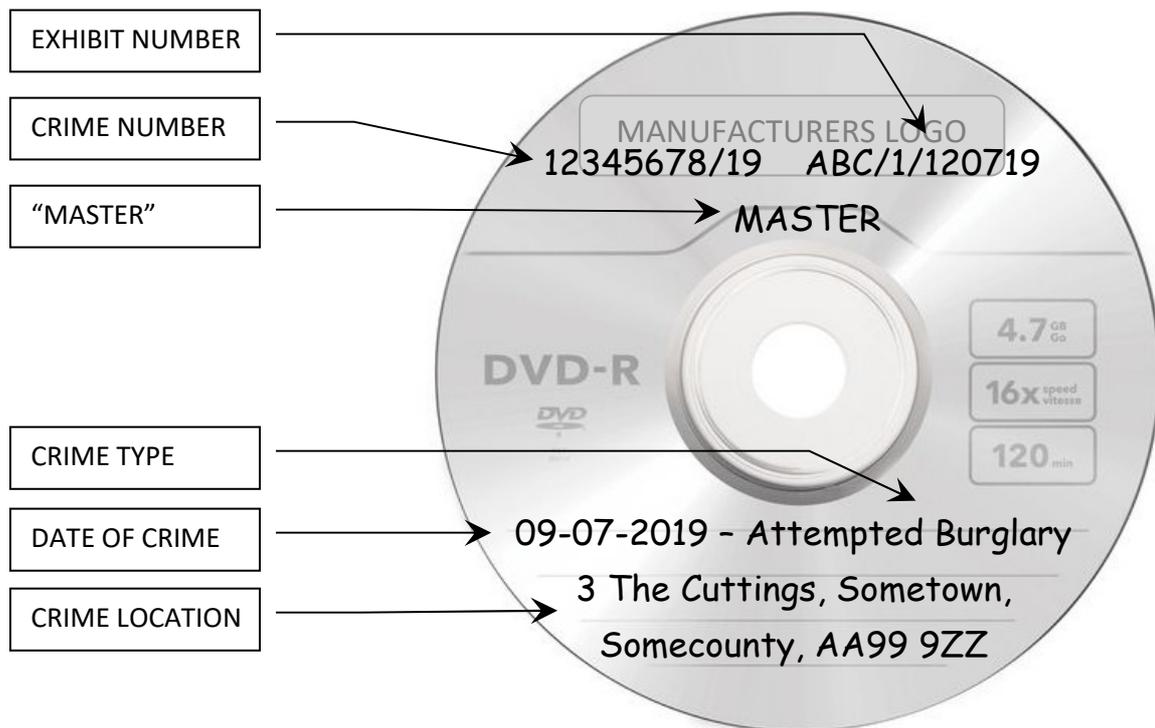
3. Identify the timeframe to be downloaded

- 3.1. Write down the time that the first event is seen on any relevant camera.
- 3.2. Write down the time that the last event is seen on any relevant camera.
- 3.3. Add an extra margin before the first event and after the last event - 10 minutes of footage prior to and post the event is useful.

4. Download the footage

- 4.1. Some CCTV systems give you the option of downloading a “CCTV player” executable with the footage. If given the option then always include it.
- 4.2. There are several scenarios for downloading which may apply:
 - 4.2.1. From your Digital Video Recorder (DVR) to a USB that you plug into it
 - 4.2.2. From your DVR to a USB stick or a folder on your PC
 - 4.2.3. From a cloud-based storage (e.g. video doorbell) to a USB stick or a folder your PC
- 4.3. If you use a USB memory stick, always erase the contents of the stick first using your PC, and virus check it. A 16GB memory stick is usually sufficient for most CCTV downloads.

- 4.4. If you download directly from your PC to a folder, create a new empty folder for this purpose. In this folder you can also include any notes in a text file, e.g. "Timestamp 22:08:47 Cam01: suspect arrives".
- 4.5. You can EITHER exhibit the footage to officers by handing them the USB memory stick; or you can burn the contents of the USB memory stick, or the folder, onto a CD (up to ~700Mb of data) or a DVD (up to about 4.5Gb of data). More than one DVD (or CD) can be used.
- 4.6. If you burn to a CD or DVD these MUST be of the readonly type so CD-R or DVD-R. Do NOT use CD-RW or DVD-RW discs. After writing, check that the footage can be played from the burnt media.
- 4.7. NOTE that if you hand over the evidence on USB then by default this will NOT be returned – you can ask officers to return it but this can take time and is very inefficient for officers. Hence burning the contents onto a relatively cheap CD-R or DVD-R is the preferred method.
- 4.8. If you create a CD-R or a DVD-R then please label it as follows before you arrange for officers to collect it – a paper sleeve is also useful to protect the media, if you can provide one.



- 4.8.1. EXHIBIT NUMBER – This should be in the format ABC/1/120719 where ABC are your initials, 1 is the exhibit number (so 2,3 if you are submitting more than one exhibit)
- 4.8.2. CRIME NUMBER – The police can advise you of the crime number if you do not know it.
- 4.8.3. "MASTER" – If you want to assist the process you can create a second identical DVD and label it "WORKING COPY".
- 4.8.4. DATE OF CRIME, TYPE, LOCATION – Remember to include the postcode.

- 4.9. If you have more than one exhibit to submit, these may be submitted on the same USB or DVD/CD, but the folders should be labelled clearly e.g. ABC_1_120719, ABC_2_140719, etc.

5. Complete a short Witness Statement (MG11)

- 5.1. Complete the front and back of the Witness Statement – see example wording on pages 3 of this document – a Word template can be found on the Hillingdon Neighbourhood Watch website.
- 5.2. Contact the Officer In Case (OIC) by email or call 101 to say that you have evidence ready for collection – always have the Crime Number ready.
- 5.3. When the officer arrives you will be asked to sign your statement and an evidence bag – the "MASTER" DVD goes into the bag and is sealed; the "WORKING COPY", if you have created one, is handed to the officer and does not go into an evidence bag.

EXAMPLE STATEMENT WORDING FOR A DOWNLOAD BY THE HOMEOWNER
(FOR STATEMENT TEMPLATE SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT)

This statement relates to a burglary on 09-07-2019 at 3 The Cuttings, Sometown, Somecounty, AA99 9ZZ. The Crime Number for this incident is 12345678/19.

I am the above-named person and my address is known to police. I live in a property which has its own CCTV system.

Recordings are kept for 30 days and are stored on my CCTV recorder hard drive which is kept in the property.

The CCTV system has 4 cameras recording on motion detect. On 12-07-2019 I downloaded footage from the system and I confirm that on the date of the download the date and time shown on the watermark of the footage was 1 hour 3 minutes 27 seconds SLOW when checked against an accurate time source.

I am aware that the footage may be used in the media to identify suspects and may also be used in court.

On 12-07-2019 I handed a DISC copy of the CCTV footage to PC12345.

I produce this CCTV as Exhibit ABC/1/120719.

EXAMPLE STATEMENT WORDING FOR A DOWNLOAD OF SOMEONE ELSE'S FOOTAGE
(FOR STATEMENT TEMPLATE SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT)

This statement relates to a burglary on 09-07-2019 at 3 The Cuttings, Sometown, Somecounty, AA99 9ZZ. The Crime Number for this incident is 12345678/19.

I am the above-named person and my address is known to police.

On 12-07-2019 I visited 4 The Cuttings, Sometown, Somecounty, AA99 9YY which has its own CCTV system.

Recordings are kept for 30 days and are stored on the CCTV recorder hard drive which is kept in the property.

The CCTV system has 4 cameras recording continuously. On 12-07-2019 I downloaded footage from the system with the permission of the homeowner and I confirm that on the date of the download the date and time shown on the watermark of the footage was 1 hour 3 minutes 27 seconds SLOW when checked against an accurate time source.

The homeowner and I are aware that the footage may be used in the media to identify suspects and may also be used in court.

On 12-07-2019 I handed a DISC copy of the CCTV footage to PC12345.

I produce this CCTV as Exhibit ABC/1/120719.
