

TM-12-93

Vancouver Police In-Car Video Evaluation

By W. Baker, D. Duthie, G. Goodall, D. Paradon

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Submitted by
Vancouver Police Department

NOTE: Further information
about this report can be
obtained by calling the
CPRC information number
(613) 998-6343

Executive Summary

In October 1992 the Vancouver Police Department operationally evaluated the *Crimtec In-Car Video System*.

The video system consists of a VHS video recorder locked in a container in the patrol car's trunk, a camera mounted behind the rear view mirror and a monitor located to the right of the driver. The officer wears a cordless microphone attached to his shirt. Video tapes are issued to each officer at the commencement of his shift and are turned in to the video registry at the completion of the shift.

Officers received a minimum of four hours of training on the use of the video system. The system is intended to provide an accurate account of any incident being taped.

Benefits of the video system:

- Creates accurate records of police activity;
- Protects both officers and the citizen;
- Enhances criminal prosecution;
- Training tool;
- Demonstrates a Department's confidence in its officers and service.

One of the many attractive aspects of the video system is that it is anticipated that the time and money spent on unfounded allegations will no longer make their way to trial due to the video record of the incident. Often the defense attorney asks to see the video tape of the incident before they decide to take a matter to trial.

In conclusion the Vancouver Police Department expressed an interest in the technology and the potential usefulness for in-car video systems was generally acknowledged.

Résumé

En octobre 1992, la police de Vancouver a évalué le Crimtec /n-Car Video System dans des conditions réelles.

Le système comporte un magnéscope VHS placé dans le coffre du véhicule de patrouille, une caméra placée derrière le retroviseur et un moniteur installé à la droite du conducteur. Le policier porte un micro sans fil fixé sur sa chemise. On remet une bande vidéo au policier au début de sa patrouille, et celui-ci la rapporte à la vidéothèque à la fin de son quart de travail.

Les policiers reçoivent au moins quatre heures de formation à l'utilisation du système vidéo, qui fournit une version exacte du déroulement d'un incident filmé.

Avantages du système vidéo :

- documenter exactement les activités policières;
- protéger policiers et citoyens;
- faciliter les poursuites au criminel;
- servir d'outil de formation;
- montrer que le service de police fait confiance à ses policiers et à leur travail.

On pense que ce système vidéo permettra d'économiser du temps et de l'argent, dans la mesure où les tribunaux n'auront plus à entendre des allégations non fondées. Il arrive souvent que l'avocat de la défense demande à voir l'enregistrement vidéo avant de décider de porter une cause devant les tribunaux.

En conclusion, la police de Vancouver s'est dite intéressée par cette technologie et l'on a reconnu, en général, qu'il pourrait être utile d'en équiper les véhicules.



93.04.19

Dr. John Arnold
National Research Council
Canadian Police Research Centre
OTTAWA, Ontario
K1A 0R6

Dear John:

On 93.04.10, the Vancouver Police Department completed the test of the Video In Car System provided by CrimTec through the CPRC. The unit was removed from our vehicle by CT&S Video, 4519 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. who were instructed to return the unit to you.

I am attaching four reports on the use and assessment of this video unit by Patrol members. Unfortunately we had start up problems with the equipment which did not lead to an enthusiastic first few weeks. Once the unit was repaired and operational, our members did conduct a fair evaluation.

There are a number of benefits to the system as listed in the April 2nd report, however, the expected test of the value of the system in court evidence or Police Act complaints did not occur.

The cons to the experience appear to be more in the nature of equipment problems than anything else.

While we are interested in and realize the benefits of this technology, our test has not provided any real examples.

Thank you for the opportunity to assess the WCS.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.E. Paradon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

D.E. Paradon, Superintendent
Cmdg. Support Services Division

REPORT 1 - November 5,1992

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
PATROL DIVISION SOUTH

DATE: 92.11.05
TO: District #3 N.C.O.s
Kiosk Attendants
FROM: A/Inspector #859 W. Baker,
i/c District #3
SUBJECT: VIDEO EQUIPPED CAR

On 92.10.30, at 10:00 hours, the video equipped car became operational. The vehicle is Shop #B8050 and is designated to the S.E. Sector, Teams 5/6 only. The vehicle is to be in operation 24 hours a day, utiliied by the designated members.

Attached is an operational manual. Please ensure the members are familiar with the equipment and operational standards.

**** UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ANY MEMBER ATTEMPT TO ADJUST OR TAMPER WITH THE EQUIPMENT. IF A PROBLEM DEVELOPS, THE CAMERA AND VIDEO HONITOR WILL BE ADJUSTED AT THE INSTALLER'S SERVICE DEPARTMENT ****

The following instructions apply:


1. An operator's manual is in the glove box of the vehicle. Do no remove it.
2. Fill in the log at the start of the shift (in the front of the car is a black log book).
3. A supply of VHS tapes and 9 volt batteries will be obtained, and stored in the trunk.
4. Any VHS tape "Held for Evidence" must be logged out including P.C.'s PIN. An N.C.O. is to be advised and initial the log.
5. A bimonthly report is to be submitted through the member's N.C.O. to this office. It should include operational standards and any problems encountered. This is test equipment and operator input is necessary as to decisions.

6. Equipment failure is to be reported to the on duty N.C.O.
Repairs can only be facilitated on day shift.

Repairs: C.T. & S. VIDEO, 4519 Canada Way, Burnaby
268-3704

This test has a variety of positive aspects - most importantly are officer safety, evidence gathering, and visual rebuttal to complaints.

It is another aid to the patrol officer and should be given a serious operational use and operator input.


W. Baker, A/Inspector #859,
i/c District #3.

/lg

REPORT 2 - December 15, 1992

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
PATROL DIVISION SOUTH

DATE: December 15, 1992
TO: Supt. D. Paradon
Bureau of Support Services
FROM: A/Inspector W. Baker
i/c District 3
SUBJECT: VIDEO CAMERA POLICE UNIT - UPDATE

On 92-10-30 the video camera unit was finally installed in Shop B8050. Initially enthusiasm for the test program was at a high level but has somewhat dropped.

During this period there has been a series of set backs due to equipment breakdown (both vehicular and camera), VCR/audio tape equipment slow in arriving and manpower shortages. The result has meant the vehicle has only been manned approximately 60% of the time estimated at the outset.

Three mechanical problems of the camera equipment have occurred since the test period was initiated. In one case the VCR eject button was broken and servicing took 10 days. Another instance occurred which resulted in 4 days servicing that of the VCR tape being "stuck" in the unit and had to be removed by the repair service.

For information purposes the repair service, CT & S Video, 4519 Canada Way have advised that this company does not have a contract for service with either CrimTech nor the National Research Department. I understand Coquitlam has also been advised.

The following is a general consensus of the members utilizing the vehicle relating specifically to the camera equipment.

PRO:

1. The unit is a useful tool especially for impaired drivers and pursuits.
2. The camera is positioned well providing a wide field of view.
3. The audio package works well.

REPORT 3 - February 22, 1992

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
PATROL DIVISION SOUTH

DATE: February 22, 1993
TO: supt. D. Paradon
Bureau of Support Services
FROM: A/S/Sgt. 107 D. Duthie
i/c Admin. District 3
SUBJECT: VIDEO EQUIPPED CAR - UPDATE REPORT

Since 92-10-30, District #3 has been assessing the video equipped police vehicle, we selected shop # **38050**, which is a new Chev. Caprice and has proven reliable with a minimum of down time through repairs.

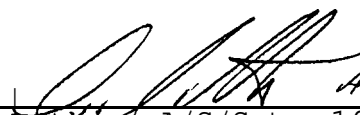
Bi-weekly reports have been submitted by several members. Despite the unit breaking down periodically, we are able to provide an overall assessment and have found the unit of limited value.


In the past 3 months we have not secured video footage for evidence. Court application would appear to be one of the areas to promote the purchase of the units. However, the patrol unit has not generated a need in this period of time.

The response from the members have been positive, however, mostly from members working one man units. These members found the unit potentially very helpful as a second witness in traffic stops.

The percentage of high risk in incidents that could be video taped in the Patrol Division are relatively low, in relationship to the deployment of this unit. I would estimate 10 police vehicles would have to be equipped with the unit, to obtain one case to justify the purchase of a single unit.

In the short term, we will continue to assess the unit and provide feedback with recommendations. I hope this provides an update on the equipment and insight into the limitations for future application.


Duthie, A/S/Sgt. 107
i/c Admin. District 3

19h 92-02-24
1/1 Noted &
file: 

REPORT 3 - February 22, 1992

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
PATROL DIVISION SOUTH

DATE: February 22, 1993
TO: supt. D. Paradon
Bureau of Support Services
FROM: A/S/Sgt. 107 D. Duthie
i/c Admin. District 3
SUBJECT: VIDEO EQUIPPED CAR - UPDATE REPORT

Since 92-10-30, District #3 has been assessing the video equipped police vehicle, we selected shop #a&O10, which is a new Chev. Caprice and has proven reliable with a minimum of down time through repairs.


Bi-weekly reports have been submitted by several members. Despite the unit breaking down periodically, we are able to provide an overall assessment and have found the unit of limited value.


In the past 3 months we have not secured video footage for evidence. Court application would appear to be one of the areas to promote the purchase of the units. However, the patrol unit has not generated a need in this period of time.

The response from the members have been positive, however, mostly from members working one man units. These members found the unit potentially very helpful as a second witness in traffic stops.

The percentage of high risk in incidents that could be video taped in the Patrol Division are relatively low, in relationship to the deployment of this unit. I would estimate 10 police vehicles would have to be equipped with the unit, to obtain one case to justify the purchase of a single unit.

In the short term, we will continue to assess the unit and provide feedback with recommendations. I hope this provides an update on the equipment and insight into the limitations for future application.


A/S/Sgt. 137
D. Duthie, A/S/Sgt. 107
i/c Admin. District 3

19h 93-02-24
Noted &
filed


Fairly wide field of vision.

Antenna
wire/microphone too
long - tangle.

Would be useful for traffic
related matters, i.e.
pursuits, Impaired's,
traffic stops.

On/off buttons on
video equipment poorly
positioned. Can turn
off without knowing.

Easy to operate.

Mike awkward to get
used to.

Used video equipment at scene
of Sudden Death - valuable
tool.

For large persons,
reduces seating area
size for passenger
seat, uncomfortable.

Allows cover officer to return
to vehicle to run MDT; can
still monitor partner's
conversations.

- Position of monitor -
elbows hit on/off
button.

- Of no use for patrol
functions except
traffic related
matters.

- Equipment was old and
breaks down.

- Must park car properly
to record anything
useful.

These comments were relatively consistent throughout the
experiment. The car was utilized more frequently in the final
three months of operation, with fewer problems, than in the first
three months.

Throughout the entire experiment, there were no instances where anything was recorded that would require the tapes being held for evidence. There were no instances where members were recorded in the course of their duties where those duties became the subject of citizen complaints.

Having spoken with some of the members who used the car, there was an interest in the technology, but it was apparent that the equipment was of little value to the patrol member per se. The members generally acknowledged the potential usefulness for such units as Traffic, ACCI, Drinking and Driving, and possibly Dog Squad, but it would seem they felt the money to purchase this equipment could be better placed at this time, and I agree.

Having evaluated the information before me, as outlined in the report, I can not recommend to this Department that there is sufficient need nor a realistic benefit to be derived from the purchase of this equipment at this time.

Submitted for your consideration.

A/S/SGT 95 G. Goodall
G. Goodall, A/Staff Sergeant 95,
i/c Administration, District 3.

93-04-05
Concur.
R. Stevens Insp 930
K D-3

93/04/05
A/D/C/C J. PARADON

THIS EXPERIMENT APPEARS TO
HAVE BEEN AN ACCURATE TEST
OF THE VIDEO/AUDIO EQUIPMENT.
THE BENEFITS ARE NOT CONVINCING
FROM ALL REPORTS.
FOR YOUR INFO, & THAT OF THE
SENIOR EXECUTIVE.

C.C. CPL. DRIEMEL

Blith Supt. 940

"COMMUNITY POLICING IS THE POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY
WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP ADDRESS COMMUNITY ISSUES"

REPORT 4 - April 2, 1992

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
PATROL DIVISION SOUTH

DATE: April 2, 1993
TO: Superintendent D. Paradon,
Commanding Support Services Division
FROM: A/Staff Sergeant 95 G. Goodall,
i/c Administration, District 3
SUBJECT: VIDEO EQUIPPED CAR - CONCLUDING REPORT

At the conclusion of this shift change, **93-04-10**, the experiment with the video equipped car will terminate. This experiment has been in effect in District **3** since **92-10-30**, at which time shop #B8050, a new Chev Caprice-, became operational as the video equipped police vehicle.

During the initial three months, the experiment met with a series of setbacks due to equipment breakdown.(both vehicular and camera).: VCR/Audio tape equipment problems were a fairly common occurrence. These equipment failures, coupled with lengthy down time for repairs, as well as manpower shortages meant the vehicle was only utilized for approximately 60% of its available time during the onset of the experiment.

The update report of A/Inspector W. BAKER submitted 92-12-15, indicates the installer of the video equipment, CT & S Video, 4519 Canada Way, Burnaby, phone 268-3704, was also used for repairs. The contact person there is one Brian WIGZELL. He further advises, however, that this outfit does not have a contract for service with either Crimtech or the National Research Council of Canada.

Having reviewed the 68's submitted by those members 'who used the car, I have capsulized their comments by pros and cons, as follows:

PROS

Reassuring when a one man unit (like a silent partner).

Suitable for traffic stops provided car properly positioned.

CONS

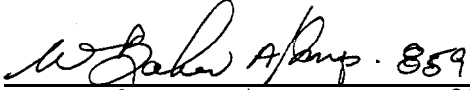
Camera not easily moved to different angles.

Wireless mike bulky and difficult to place.

CON:

1. The positioning of the video monitor causes some problems.
2. The equipment is either old or well used and breakdown cases frustration.
3. The vehicle has to be parked in a specific way in order to video accurately.

To date two tapes are being held for evidence owe a "jumper" crime scene, the other a traffic situation. General comments indicate the camera equipment may well be an advantage to the Traffic Division, i.e., accident investigation or in roadblock situations. Further reports will be forwarded as scheduled.


W. Baker, A/Inspector 859
i/c District 3

/gh