

Title: **Digital Photography for Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Documentation**

I. **Policy:**

- A. Photos taken during a forensic examination are considered part of the patient's medical record.
- B. S.A.F.E.-Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners or those designated by the SAFE are the only individuals qualified to take photos in these cases.
- C. One digital view should include the patient's face for identification purposes. When possible a full body picture should be taken. Utilize a standardized measurement instrument in one of the pictures to indicate the size of injuries. Pictures should be taken from close, mid and long range distances as determined by the SAFE.
- D. Pictures of genital injuries should be taken with the colposcope camera/equipment unless otherwise determined by the SAFE.
- E. The SAFE who has completed the forensic exam should transfer ("burn") images from the Photo card from the digital camera to two CD's. This is a part of the documentation for each forensic exam completed by the SAFE.
- F. Utilize the Photo Log to identify the location of the view of the patient when taking photographs. Include the Photo Log with the patient's medical record. Any photos of bodily injuries should also be indicated on the body map located in the chart on page 7.
- G. The SAFE or designee will transport one properly identified CD to Health Information Management (HIM) utilizing a chain of custody documentation sheet that will remain with the CD. When an identified recipient from HIM is not available to receive the CD, the CD and the chain of custody form will be secured by a Mount Nittany Medical Center Security Officer in the hospital safe.
- H. The other properly identified CD will be transferred to the law enforcement officer with the sexual assault kit and all other evidence collected by the SAFE during the forensic exam.
- I. When a CD copy of the photo memory card cannot be made at the time of the evidence collection, the original photo memory card will be secured by a Mount Nittany Medical Center Security Officer until such time that the CD can be made.
- J. The CD or memory card will not be transported to HIM unless it can be properly secured in HIM.

II. **Purpose:**

Record, preserve and transport digital photographs to archive and maintain integrity of the photographic documentation.

III. **Definitions:**

IV. **Standards:**

A. **Personnel**

B. **Equipment**

1. Digital camera
2. Photo memory card
3. Marker
4. Chain of Custody Form
5. Photo Log
6. Measurement scale
7. Blank CD
8. "Apacer" or Computer

C. **Process**

1. Consent is obtained prior to photography.
2. Take one full-length photo of each victim
3. Take at least one photo of each non-genital injury. Utilize a standardized measurement instrument in one of the pictures to indicate the size of injuries. Pictures should be taken from close, mid and long range.
4. Take photos of genital injuries with the colposcope camera when possible and indicated. Utilize the hand held digital camera when the colposcope camera is not available.
5. Digital photos will be ("burned") transferred to two CD's per hospital procedure (as follows) by the SAFE completing the forensic exam.
6. Call HIM to verify availability of Director, HIM Supervisor, Transcription Supervisor or Coding Supervisor to secure the CD in HIM. In the event none of these people are available one CD with a chain of custody will be secured by the hospital Security Officer in the hospital safe.
7. One CD with a chain of custody will be taken to HIM by a Security Officer.
8. The white copy of the chain of evidence stays with the CD.
9. The CD will be transported by the SAFE, the Mount Nittany Medical Center Security Officer or designee and secured in HIM per hospital policy.
10. The second CD will be given to the law enforcement officer with

the sexual assault evidence kit and all other evidence.

11. All transfer of evidence will be documented on the page eleven of the "Reported Sexual Assault Rape Interview Documentation" patient chart.

D. Documentation

V. References:

Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals: The Official Handbook, Update 3, RI-11, August 2005

VI. Attachments:

Chain of Custody and Photolog

Sponsor: Administrative Director, Emergency Services

Senior Vice President for Patient Care Services

Date Effective: 11/18/2003

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***Designates change.**

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Approvals:

Executive Approval

Sponsor

**Other/Medical Staff
Review**

Senior VP for Patient Care
Services

Adm. Director, Emergency
Services

11/21/2006

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