

A 'BLACK BOX' IN BOMB DISPOSAL VEHICLES

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Recently, all bomb disposal vehicles have been installed with video recording systems, which record the images sent from the camera attached to the bomb disposal robot. The video signal from these cameras is sent by video transmitter to the vehicle, for viewing on a monitor inside the vehicle.

Purpose

Video-recording of field incidents has three purposes:

1. Debriefing: At the conclusion of every bomb emergency call-out, the Division conducts a debriefing and evaluation regarding the course of the event and the actions taken by the team. The debriefing is usually based on the Bomb Disposal Officer's (BDO) subjective view and memory of the event. A debriefing based on an objective video recording will give a much more reliable and accurate report of the event.

2. Real-time updating of senior bomb disposal officer:

Occasionally, an officer – who was not present from the beginning of an event – arrives at the scene and is required to make command decisions, based solely on information from the team which has been on the spot. An update, including a timed video recording of the event and of the actions taken by the BDO's, would provide a much better basis for such decisions.

3. Developing a data-bank of recorded and documented alarm incidents:

This can provide the Division with excellent training and evaluation material for instruction and refresher courses.

Specification

The criteria, on which the specific system was chosen and developed by the Bomb Disposal

Division, were its high-quality performance and easy handling. The object was to find a system that would not interfere with the BDO's actions at the site. The BDO's call the system their "black box" (on the model of the "black box" used to record flight data in aircraft) because it is situated in a spot which is difficult to access and records all events as they happen, from the moment the 'Alarm' button is pushed. Should the need arise in the course of an incident to review what has occurred up to that point, the 'Alarm' switch can be overridden and the system put on remote control, enabling officers to view everything on the tape recording up to that point.

In the future, the Bomb Disposal Division intends to use video cameras fixed to the BDO's helmets, which will also record and transmit pictures and other data to the vehicle at the scene, for immediate and future reference.