



ACPO Position Statement:

The Remote Monitoring of Suspect Interviews

**National Investigative Interviewing
Strategic Steering Group (NISSG)**

Introduction

The purpose of this position paper is to set out some guidance on the remote monitoring of interviews with suspects.

Remote monitoring can improve the quality of an investigative interview with a suspect by ensuring that all the issues are covered, appropriate techniques are used at the right time and any investigative opportunities are thoroughly explored. It can also help with the quality control of interviews and with the training and development of interviewers.

Its use should be viewed as essential when investigating major crime and it should be seen as an integral component part of any suspect interview strategy.

Background

Home Office Circular 50/1995 describes the procedural requirements involved in remotely monitoring interviews with suspects. Even though it refers exclusively to the monitoring of tape-recorded interviews, it is still relevant today regardless of the increased use of digital technology.

The ACPO Position

Decision Making

The decision to remotely monitor an interview should be made by a Senior Investigating Officer or an Investigating Officer in consultation with, where appropriate, an Interview Adviser.¹

Custody Records

Careful consideration should be given as to the staffing involved in remotely monitoring the interview.

¹ The role of an interview adviser is described in the *National Investigative Interviewing Strategy*, (ACPO 2009).

The fact that an interview or part of an interview is to be remotely monitored should be recorded in the suspect's custody record. The record should cover the purpose of monitoring the interview (e.g. to assist with the investigation) and should include the names of everybody monitoring it.

Those involved in remote monitoring should not usually try to communicate with the interviewers during the interview because it is likely to disrupt the interview process. The need for interruptions can be reduced by having regular breaks between the interview sessions to give interviewers and those monitoring the interview an opportunity to consult each other.

Equipment and Facilities

Fixed Equipment

Wherever possible any private consultations between the suspect and their legal adviser should take place in a separate room.

Remote monitoring equipment must only operate when recording equipment in the interview room is switched on and the interview has commenced. This ensures that any privileged conversations between the suspect and their legal representative in the interview room remain confidential.

A warning light should automatically illuminate when the remote monitor is activated. The light must be clearly visible to everybody in the interview room.

A notice must be displayed in a prominent position in all interview rooms where remote monitoring equipment is fitted. The notice must cover the following points:

- That the room has the capacity for remote monitoring;
 - That a warning light will be illuminated when the remote monitoring equipment is switched on;
 - That the details of those monitoring the interview will be recorded on the suspect's custody record.

Portable Equipment

Portable equipment may be used to monitor interviews with suspects. If it is fitted with a warning light that illuminates when the remote monitor is activated a notice containing the same information referred to above should be displayed in the interview room. If it is not fitted with a warning light it is important that a separate room that is not fitted with recording equipment is set aside for privileged consultations between the suspect and their legal adviser; in these circumstances a modified notice should be displayed omitting any reference to a warning light.

Interview Process

The interview process should proceed in accordance with PACE and current guidance. The contents of the warning notice should be explained to the suspect at the beginning of the interview and recorded on the recording media.

Acknowledgement

This position statement was prepared by DS Andy Smith, an ACPO Approved Interview Adviser from Durham Police.

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