Photo Storage and Distribution

1. **Before Taking Photos**
   a. Ensure your SD card does not contain photos from another case
      i. Switch SD cards between cases if using a digital camera
   b. Utilize a case number or other identifier written on a placard: take a photo of the placard to signify that the following photos are for a new case. (i.e., a photo of an ID card)
      i. Use this method if you can't switch SD cards or if you are using a mobile device.
   c. If you use an iPhone for case photos regularly, consider changing your phone's settings to capture images in JPEG rather than HEIC (iPhone's default format). This is a more universally transferrable photo format. Samsung phones are defaulted to storing as JPEGs.
   d. Check your camera settings –JPEG is the easiest file format to use without compromising image quality. Formats like RAW or CR2 are not easily transferred, and the file size is often too large to upload to online case management systems.

2. **Preparation for transferring photos from the SD card to the computer**
   a. Choose a storage location like your device that is provided by your agency (laptop or computer drive), external storage device (USB drive, external hard drive) or secure cloud storage.
   b. Determine folder organization strategy.
      i. For example:
         1. Year > Month > Case Number
            a. Scene Photos, Exam Photos, Property Photos
      ii. No matter what you choose, follow the same steps for EVERY CASE
      iii. It is imperative to separate photos by case when storing.
      iv. If the folders are organized properly, there is no need to rename each photo.
      v. Consider storing other electronic documents in the case number folder as well.

3. **Transferring Photos from SD Card to Computer**
   a. Connect your SD card to your computer
      i. Typically requires an SD card reader. Sometimes the SD card can be plugged directly into the computer
   b. Open File Explorer:
      i. On the left side of the screen, under 'This PC', you should see the SD card listed as a new drive, often labeled something like "Removable Disk" or the card's brand name (e.g., "*SD Card*" or "*USB Drive (F:)*"). Double-click to open it.
   c. Access the SD Card:

i. You'll usually find your photos in a folder called *DCIM* (Digital Camera Images). This is the standard folder for camera files.

ii. Inside the DCIM folder, there may be subfolders (e.g., *100CANON*, *101APPLE*, etc.), depending on your camera or device.

d. Select and Copy Photos:

    i. Browse through the folders and select the photos you want to transfer. You can select multiple photos by holding the Ctrl key and clicking each one. You can also use Ctrl + A to select all.

    ii. Right-click and choose Copy or press Ctrl + C to copy the selected files.

e. Paste Photos on Your Computer:

    i. Navigate to the case's file folder in your file storage location. (You made this in step 2)

        1. It is recommended to have one window open with the case's file folder and one for the SD card so you can see the files have transferred.

    ii. Right-click in the case's file folder and choose Paste or press Ctrl + V to paste the photos into the folder. You can also drag-and-drop the selected files from the SD card file location into the case file folder.

f. Safely Eject the SD Card

4. **Transferring Photos from Mobile Device to Computer**

a. Use a USB cable to connect your Phone to the computer.

    i. If it's the first time you're connecting your Phone, you may need to unlock the phone and tap "Trust This Computer" when prompted.

b. Open File Explorer:

    i. In the sidebar, look for your Phone under the Devices and Drives section. It might appear as "Apple iPhone" or something similar.

c. Navigate to the DCIM Folder:

    i. Double-click on your Phone's icon in File Explorer on the left side of the screen.

    ii. You'll see a folder named DCIM (Digital Camera Images), which contains your photos and videos.

d. Select and Copy Photos:

    i. Open the DCIM folder, and you'll find subfolders containing your photos and videos.

    ii. Select the photos or folders you want to copy (you can use Ctrl + A to select everything).

    iii. Right-click and choose Copy or press Ctrl + C.

e. Paste Photos to Your Computer:

    i. Navigate to the case's file folder in your file storage location. (You made this in step 2)

> > 1. It is recommended to have one window open with the case's file folder and one for the SD card so you can see the files have transferred.
> > ii. Right-click in the case's file folder and choose Paste or press Ctrl + V to paste the photos into the folder. You can also drag-and-drop the selected files from the phone file location into the case file folder.
> f. Eject phone Safely.

5. **<u>Uploading photos to Online Case Management System</u>**, like MDILog
   a. Have your case file folder open in one window.
   b. Navigate to the case's photo upload tab in MDILog.
   c. Drag and drop photos to the appropriate folder header, like Scene, Exam, Property, etc.
   d. If a file is too large to be uploaded, you may need to use an image resizing software like FastStone to resize it. You will upload the compressed image, but make sure to also keep the original files.

6. **<u>Release/Distribution of Photos (and/or case documents) & Chain of Custody Management</u>**
   a. Require request from outside agency for release of images/documentation
      i. It is recommended to only release to law enforcement agencies or prosecuting attorney's offices.
      ii. Distribution to additional outside parties would be per a court order
   b. Make a note in the case that a request was made for release of images/documents
      i. If you can upload a copy of the request to the online case management system, it is recommended to do so. Otherwise, a note in the case file is sufficient.
   c. Create a disc that is locked for 'view-only' with the requested images/documents.
      i. Label the disc with the name and case number, as well as a notation of what copy number that item is (ex: if LE and PA office want discs, one would receive 'COPY 1' and the other would receive 'COPY 2'.
      ii. Label the disc with a disclaimer of 'DO NOT COPY' and/or 'DO NOT DISTRIBUTE'.
   d. Securely send the disc to the requesting party.
   e. Make note of the request fulfillment in the case file.

Please note that photos taken by contracted agency for an out of county case belongs to the case and are available for distribution by the respective coroner. Requests for exam photos are processed through the county coroner, not contracted agency.