

Digital Camera Equipment Recommendations

for Law Enforcement

August 17, 2011

DSLR Camera Recommendations

Level 1: *Entry-level DSLR systems. These will perform most functions, but have limitations that the users need to recognize and overcome.*

Level 2: *Semi-professional systems. These are very high quality systems and applicable to agencies that have a frequent need to document crime and accident scenes.*

Level 3: *Entry-level professional systems. These offer highest quality images for forensic law enforcement application and use a sensor the size of a 35mm negative. These cameras are appropriate for and should be the only consideration for crime labs and dedicated evidence photography technicians.*

list prices are reflected below, actual prices will vary

Quant	Description	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	
		Canon	Nikon	Canon	Nikon	Canon	Nikon
1	Canon EOS Rebel T3 w/18-55mm lens	\$ 599.99					
1	Canon EOS Rebel T2i w/18-55mm lens ¹	\$ 799.99					
1	Canon Speedlight 430EX Flash	\$ 299.00					
1	Nikon D3100 w/ AF-S DX 18-55mm VR lens		\$ 649.95				
1	Nikon D5100 w/ AF-S DX 18-55mm VR lens ¹		\$ 799.95				
1	Nikon SB700 flash		\$ 329.95				
1	Nikon D90 camera body ²				\$ 899.95		
1	Nikkor AF-S DX 18-105mm ED VR lens (to go with D90 body)				\$ 399.95		
1	Nikon D7000 w/ AF-S DX 18-105mm ED VR lens (kit)				\$ 1,499.95		
1	Nikon SB900 flash				\$ 494.95		
1	Nikkor AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G lens (optional)				\$ 199.95		
1	Canon EOS 60D w/ 18-135mm lens (kit)			\$ 1,199.00			
1	Canon Speedlight 580EX II Flash			\$ 499.99			
1	Canon EF 35mm f/2 lens (optional)			\$ 319.99			
1	Canon EOS 5D Mark II camera body					\$ 2,499.00	
1	Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L Lens					\$ 1,399.00	
1	Canon EF-S 60mm f/2.8 Macro Lens (very important to have this lens)					\$ 469.99	
1	Canon Speedlight 580EX II Flash					\$ 499.99	
1	Nikon D700 camera body						\$ 2,699.95
1	Nikon AF-S 24-70mm f/2.8 ED ED lens						\$ 1,889.95
1	Nikon AF Micro-Nikkor 60mm f/2.8D (very important to have this lens)						\$ 519.95
1	Nikon SB900 flash						\$ 494.95
Following items are needed for all systems:							
1	Manfrotto 055XPROB Tripod w/ VGSBH250 ³			x	x	x	x
1	Vanguard Alta Pro 264 Tripod w/ VGSBH250 ³	x	x				
2	4GB SD cards: Class 6 minimum	x	x				
2	8GB SD cards: Class 6 minimum			x	x		
2	8GB CF cards: 420x or faster					x	x
1	Spare camera battery	x	x	x	x	x	x
1	Protective UV filter for each lens ⁴	x	x	x	x	x	x
1	Polarizing Filter ⁵	x	x	x	x	x	x
1	Rubber lens hood for zoom lens	x	x	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1	Flash TTL cord	x	x	x	x	x	x
1	Remote shutter release (corded or cordless)	x	x	x	x	x	x
1	Stormcase iM2200 w/ cubed foam		x				
1	Stormcase iM2300 w/ cubed foam				x		
1	Stormcase iM2400 w/ cubed foam						x

¹ One of these two systems are preferred over the basic entry level cameras, and offer numerous benefits to the investigator

² The Nikon D90 is a work-horse camera, and although being replaced by a newer version, is a solid investment for law enforcement applications

³ Vanguard SBH250 ball head & quick release plate

⁴ Protective UV or skylight filters are not created equal - do not purchase cheap glass! Buy a medium to high-quality filter based on the camera system selected

⁵ A "circular" polarizing filter is required for these cameras. Buy a medium to high-quality brand-name filter based on the camera system selected

A word of caution when pricing camera systems: there are many internet sites that advertise prices well-below retail. Some of the low, low advertised prices on cameras - even on Amazon.com - are "gray market" cameras and have no US warranty. That means no warranty.

The equipment recommended above is based on independent hands-on testing and evaluation by EPIC-Certified Evidence Photographers and without influence from manufacturers. This list will be periodically updated.