
Body Worn Camera's (BWC)

706.1 PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide officers with instructions on when and how to use body-worn cameras (BWCs) so that officers may reliably record their contacts with the public in accordance with the law.

706.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department that officers shall activate the BWC when such use is appropriate to the proper performance of his or her official duties, where the recordings are consistent with this policy and law. This policy does not govern the use of surreptitious recording devices used in undercover operations.

706.3 PROCEDURES

- (a) This agency has adopted the use of the BWC to accomplish several objectives. The primary objectives are as follows:
 - 1. BWCs allow for accurate documentation of police-public contacts, arrests, and critical incidents. They also serve to enhance the accuracy of officer reports and testimony in court.
 - 2. Audio and video recordings also enhance this agency's ability to review probable cause for arrest, officer and suspect interaction, and evidence for investigative and prosecutorial purposes and to provide additional information for officer evaluation and training.
 - 3. The BWC may also be useful in documenting crime and accident scenes or other events that include the confiscation and documentation of evidence or contraband.
- (b) When and How to Use the BWC
 - (a) Officers should activate the BWC to record contacts with citizens in the performance of official duties the officer feels may result in court action. It is understood; however, that not all situations will be readily identifiable as resulting in court action. Additionally, our resources do not allow for the recording and storage of video for every contact an officer may have. This section is not intended to limit the officer from using discretion to activate the BWC as he/she deems necessary to document facts at any scene.
 - (b) If an officer fails to record an entire contact, or interrupts the recording, the officer shall document why a recording was interrupted or was terminated. It is permissible for an officer to mute the camera during discussions with other officers are occurring regarding investigatory or other misc matters; however, the recording shall not be terminated and the camera mute function shall be turned off upon re-contact with involved parties.
 - (c) Civilians shall not be allowed to review the recordings at the scene.

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(c) Procedures for BWC Use

- (a) BWC equipment is issued primarily to uniformed personnel as authorized by this agency. Officers who are assigned BWC equipment must use the equipment unless otherwise authorized by supervisory personnel.
- (b) Police personnel shall use only BWCs issued by this department. The BWC equipment and all data, images, video, and metadata captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the agency.
- (c) Police personnel who are assigned BWCs must complete an agency approved and/or provided training program to ensure proper use and operations. Additional training may be required at periodic intervals to ensure the continued effective use and operation of the equipment, proper calibration and performance, and to incorporate changes, updates, or other revisions in policy and equipment.
- (d) BWC equipment is the responsibility of individual officers and will be used with reasonable care to ensure proper functioning. Equipment malfunctions shall be brought to the attention of the officer's supervisor as soon as possible.
- (e) Officers shall inspect and test the BWC periodically in order to verify proper functioning and shall notify their supervisor of any problems.
- (f) Officers shall not edit, alter, erase, duplicate, copy, share, or otherwise distribute in any manner BWC recordings without prior written authorization and approval of the chief executive officer (CEO) or his or her designee. It is permissible for officers to duplicate recordings for addition into evidence/property entry.
- (g) Officers are encouraged to inform their supervisor of any recordings that may be of value for training purposes.
- (h) If an officer is suspected of wrongdoing or involved in an officer-involved shooting or other serious use of force, the department reserves the right to limit or restrict an officer from viewing the video file.
- (i) Requests for deletion of portions of the recordings (e.g., in the event of a personal recording) must be submitted in writing and approved by the chief executive officer or his or her designee in accordance with state record retention laws. All requests and final decisions shall be kept on file.
- (j) Officers shall note in incident, arrest, and related reports when recordings were made during the incident in question. However, BWC recordings are not a replacement for written reports.

(d) Restrictions on Using the BWC

- 1. BWCs shall be used only in conjunction with official law enforcement duties. The BWC shall not generally be used to record:
 - (a) Communications with other police personnel without the permission of the Chief, Captain or Lieutenant;
 - (b) Encounters with undercover officers or confidential informants;

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- (c) When on break or otherwise engaged in personal activities; or
- (d) In any location where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a restroom or locker room.

706.4 STORAGE

- (a) All files shall be securely downloaded periodically and no later than the end of each shift. Each file shall contain information related to the date, case number and assigned officer.
- (b) All images and sounds recorded by the BWC are the exclusive property of this department. Accessing, copying, or releasing files for nonlaw enforcement purposes is strictly prohibited.
- (c) All access to BWC data (images, sounds, and metadata) must be specifically authorized by the Chief, Captain or Lieutenant and all access is to be audited to ensure that only authorized users are accessing the data for legitimate and authorized purposes. Officers may review stored recordings for investigatory purposes.
- (d) Officers shall copy the entire recording onto a DVD and enter the DVD into evidence/property of the case. If the video is too large to capture onto a DVD, the officer shall contact a supervisor who will locate a USB flashdrive and the video will be copied onto the flash drive and the drive then entered into evidence/property.
- (e) BWC files will be securely stored in accordance with state records retention laws and no longer than 120 days if not related to a case.