



Police Body
Cameras

Overview

- 2013 approximately 33% of municipal police had some form of body camera program
- 2016 increased to over 50% of police departments
- South Carolina and Nevada* are the only states currently requiring body cameras for police officers
- At least twenty-four states have laws governing required policy, storage, or specific procedures regarding Freedom of Information for police body camera programs

Costs of Body Cameras

- Cameras
 - Mounts
 - Software and licensing fees
 - Docking stations
 - Information technology infrastructure costs (IP switch, routers, etc.)
 - Additional software (redaction)
 - Storage costs
 - Spare cameras, batteries, equipment, etc.
 - Records and administrative costs
- Less reliable systems can be built with significant upfront costs if IT resources exist and can be managed in-house
 - Few capabilities above recording and labeling videos
 - Reliable systems require significant infrastructure, software and storage fees, and human resource needs
 - Contrary to vendor presentations, all video systems require oversight, dedicated personnel, and recurring costs

Recording Policy

- All calls for service in which citizen contact is made
- All traffic stops
- All citizen transports (excluding ride-alongs)
- All investigatory stops
- All foot pursuits
- Arrest of any person
- Searches of any kind
- Seizure of any evidence
- Miranda warnings and response from in custody suspects
- Statements made by citizens and suspects
- K-9 searches of vehicles

- Issuances of written violations
- Issuance of warning (traffic, criminal trespass, etc.)
- Arriving at law enforcement events and/or citizen contacts initiated by other officers
- Crime scene investigation
- Other incidents the officer reasonably believes should be recorded

Careful consideration needs to be given to “should” and “shall”

Absent of automatic recording, understanding should be given to unexpected or dynamic situations where an officer may fail to activate the camera

Retention and Privacy

- Departments must determine what to record and for how long
- Retention for everything ranging from inadvertent to deadly force encounters
- Governing bodies may have additional requirements for video retention (campus law enforcement)
- Privacy Concerns:
 - Suspects – when to release video
 - Witnesses – fears of assisting police
 - Victims – revictimization upon release
 - Juveniles
 - General public
 - Health care facilities (HIPPA)
 - Educational records (FERPA)

Benefits of Body Worn Police Cameras

- Better transparency
- Improves trust
- Reduces complaints compared to departments without body cameras
- Fewer incidents of use of force for officers with body camera
- Quicker resolution of complaints and/or high-profile officer encounters
- Provides account of behaviors prior to officer response to resistance
- Provides context to limited or edited public recordings
- Provides corroborating evidence for court to avoid trials or increase convictions
- Ease in collecting suspect, victim, and witness interviews
- “Civilizing Effect” on police-citizen encounters
- Provides department specific data to improve policies and procedures
- Coaching opportunities to improve officer interactions
- Incident recall for report writing and prior to court testimony

Negative Impact of Body Cameras

- Cameras do not capture the officer's mindset at the time based on what he or she perceived was occurring
- Officer reports may be inconsistent with video due to stress and immediate recall memory
- Camera technology may reveal wider angle or better view of situation than officer could observe
- Significant start-up and maintenance costs
- Recurring software fees deducted from decreasing police operating budgets
- Storage and retention costs
- Human resource demands
- Supervisory and administrative review costs
- Decreased trust when officers fail to activate cameras
- Impacts to relationships during officer – community interaction
- Limited market competition
- Unreliable automated activation
- Time consuming video uploading and video labeling
- Difficulty of adoption for veteran officers
- Officer – department trust issues



Questions/Discussion