

**Department of Public Safety  
Police Division  
Operations Policies and Procedures**

**Title:** Body Worn Camera Digital Recording System

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# ***Body Worn Camera Digital Recording System***

## **I. PURPOSE**

The University of Cincinnati Police Division (UCPD) deploys the “**Body Worn Camera (BWC)**” in an effort to fulfill its commitment to professionalism, accountability and transparency. The BWC is a video and audio recording system assigned to an officer, which is worn on their person. The BWC is deployed by uniformed University Law Enforcement and Security Officers. The BWC is meant to supplement the officer’s visual perspective of an incident, thus allowing the officer a greater opportunity to capture details otherwise missed during times his/her attention might be focused elsewhere.

The BWC captures unbiased video and audio recordings of interactions with the public, crime scene investigations, and general patrol operations. The BWC provides an accurate account and review of an incident and may be used to corroborate subsequent trial preparation practices, procedures, and evidence collection.

## **II. Policy**

The BWC shall be used for legitimate law enforcement and security purposes only; as described by statute and departmental policy. All data shall be captured, maintained, stored, viewed, and disclosed in accordance with the prescribed policy.

## **III. Definitions**

**Accidental Video Recording:** When a video recording is initiated inadvertently and has no evidentiary value.

**Categorized Incident:** Video footage that is automatically assigned a title/category by the Computer Aided dispatch (CAD) system. Such titles include Court, Domestic Dispute, and Traffic Stops.

**Incidental Video Recording:** When a video recording is initiated by a BWC system signal for uninvolved officer and has no evidentiary value.

**Mandatory Review Video:** UCPD video of incidents that must be reviewed by the approving or investigating supervisor. These incidents include all Arrests, Citations, Uses of Force, Vehicle Pursuits, Vehicle Accidents, all Traffic Stops and Off-campus Pedestrian Stops.

**Non-Mandatory Review Video:** UCPD video that is not automatically subject to supervisor review as described above, but may be randomly selected for review and include any uncategorized incidents.

**Serious Misconduct:** Conduct that could result in suspension or dismissal to include but not limited to, criminal conduct, sexual harassment or sexual misconduct, excessive or unnecessary use of force or brutality, corruption, improper searches and seizures,

# ***Body Worn Camera Digital Recording System***

discrimination, racial profiling or biased policing.

**Uncategorized Incident:** Video footage that is not automatically assigned a title/category by the Computer Aided dispatch (CAD) integration system due to a lapse in time of video activation.

## **IV. Procedures**

### **A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **DEPARTMENT ISSUED BODY WORN DIGITAL RECORDING SYSTEM**

1. All officers will be trained in the use of and issued a BWC system. BWC equipment will be used in accordance with BWC training and this procedure.
2. All police officers will wear their issued BWC while on duty.
  - a. Officers will wear the BWC on the left side of their uniformed shirt, at chest level, if wearing the pocket clip mount.
  - b. If the officer is wearing the magnet mount for the BWC the magnet will be mounted in the center of the uniform shirt, between the second and third button from the top.
  - c. The magnet mount should be used when wearing a bike jacket or winter coat, the BWC will be mounted over the zipper, in the center of the jacket, level with the second button from the top of the uniform shirt.
3. Special assignment and plainclothes officers will wear their BWC when engaged in activities where the use is reasonably foreseeable, or as directed by a supervisor.
4. Officers will not use any personally owned recording equipment or devices while on duty without approval from the Chief of Police.
  - a. Data images, video, and metadata captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the BWC is the sole property of the UCPD.
  - b. Requests for BWC images of footage shall be made through a Public Records request.
5. Only a BWC with a fully charged indicator will be used or taken at the beginning of a tour of duty.
6. Officers will create a “pre-test” video prior to leaving the station to ensure their BWC is working properly.
7. Officers who discover an operational defect with the BWC system will attempt to correct the problem according to the training provided (I.E.: reseating cables, cycling the power, etc.).
  - a. If the BWC is found to have a physical defect or malfunction, the officer will immediately notify their supervisor, remove the device from service, and complete a BWC/Dash Cam Request for Service form describing the events leading up to failure.
  - b. The supervisor will issue the officer a spare BWC and document the issuance in the equipment log.
8. Officers shall not:
  - a. Bypass or attempt to override the BWC equipment, including the audio function.
  - b. Erase, alter, or delete any recording produced by the BWC.

## ***Body Worn Camera Digital Recording System***

9. Officers shall notify their supervisor as soon as practical if either an accidental or an incidental video recording is created. Once notified the supervisor shall review the video and categorize it as either Accidental or Incidental Recording in the system prior to the end of their shift.

### **B. WHEN DEPARTMENT ISSUED BWC SYSTEM USE IS REQUIRED**

1. This section is not intended to describe every possible situation where the system shall be used. In general, the BWC shall be used to record activities where law enforcement action is about to occur, occurring, or has occurred, or where other circumstances could result in an officer/citizen contact.
  - a. In some circumstances it may not be possible to capture images of an incident due to position of the BWC.
  - b. In all instances, the audio portion can be valuable evidence and therefore, purposely muting the audio where BWC activation is required is prohibited.
2. Officers responding to the following scenes shall activate their BWC,
  - a. When dispatched to or self-initiate a call for service; or
  - b. Detention or arrest of an individual(s), or when such action is likely to occur; or
  - c. Interacting with a detained or arrested person; or
  - d. Confronting disorderly or hostile subjects; or
  - e. Searching for or collecting evidence; or
  - f. Traffic stops, from the initiation to the completion of the enforcement action; or
  - g. OVI investigations, including field sobriety tests; or
  - h. Warrant service; or
  - i. Investigatory or reasonable suspicion detentions; or
  - j. Any contact that becomes adversarial in an incident that would not otherwise require recording. In those situations, it may be impractical or unreasonable for officers to activate their BWC system before taking police action. In that case, officers will activate their BWC as soon as practical to record the remainder of the incident; or
  - k. When approached by any person wishing to complain about services provided by or employees of the Department of Public Safety; or
  - l. As directed by a supervisor
3. While always secondary to the performance of official law enforcement actions as described above, officers should be aware of locations that could compromise an individual's reasonable expectation of privacy. Examples include residence halls, restrooms and locker rooms, or areas with sensitive materials. In these areas, officer(s) should continue to activate the camera as required in the above (B 1. and 2. a-l), but would not normally activate during routine patrol and/or routine conversation as described below (E.1. and 2.).
  - a. In situations where the camera was activated as required, but an individual's privacy could be a concern, officers may briefly cover the lens, leaving the audio to capture the portion of excluded video. However, in no circumstances should officers risk their safety, the safety of others, or jeopardize the evidentiary value of the video for privacy's sake.

## ***Body Worn Camera Digital Recording System***

4. In addition to the required situations, officers shall activate the system anytime they believe its use would be appropriate and/or valuable to document an incident
5. There may be instances in which an officer is required to take immediate action to an event that occurs directly in front of them which may not allow time to activate their BWC. In these circumstances, the officer shall activate their BWC as soon as practical.
6. Failure to activate the BWC as required by this policy will be reviewed and will result in corrective action up to and including coaching, counseling, reprimand, suspension or termination.

### **C. UPLOADING VIDEO, STORAGE and CHARGING**

1. All video/recordings captured during the shift(s) are automatically uploaded via Wi-Fi. In absence of the ability to automatically upload (no Wi-Fi available), officers are required to manually **upload, charge** and **store** their BWC in the docking stations located on station before securing for the day.
2. If an officer docks their BWC to download or charge prior to the end of their shift, they must immediately replace their BWC with a spare until their issued BWC is through charging or downloading.

### **D. DEACTIVATION OF THE BWC SYSTEM IS AUTHORIZED WHEN**

1. The incident has concluded
  - a. For purposes of this section, conclusion of an incident has occurred when:
    - 1) An arrested suspect has been processed and released from custody
    - 2) All witnesses and victims have been interviewed
    - 3) No further law enforcement action is likely to occur (e.g., after an encounter has concluded and the subject is sent on their way)

### **E. WHEN DEPARTMENT ISSUED BWC SYSTEM USE IS NOT REQUIRED**

1. Activation of the BWC systems is not required during routine patrol.
2. While the officer is engaged in non-enforcement activity; such as meal breaks or routine conversation with the general public.

### **F. BODY WORN DIGITAL RECORDINGS AS EVIDENCE**

1. In all Critical Use of Force incidents, once the scene is secure, the OIC will direct a supervisor to secure the involved officer(s)' BWC and vehicle cameras' video. The supervisor will document date, time, location, and from which officer(s) the BWC or vehicle camera video was obtained.
2. Recordings will be manually erased only by the system administrator in accordance with Ohio Public Records Law (149.43), University records retention schedule, and approval by the Chief of Police, unless preserved for:
  - a. Court proceedings and any subsequent appeal process(es)
  - b. Ongoing criminal or internal investigation

### **G. SUPERVISORY REVIEW OF BWC SYSTEM RECORDINGS**

## ***Body Worn Camera Digital Recording System***

1. Supervisors shall ensure that if there are multiple officers at an incident, all videos are categorized consistently and correctly.
  - a. Videos/recordings will be reviewed to ensure they comply with Division policies and procedures.
  - b. Supervisors will utilize the following process to access videos:
    - 1) Open Windows Explorer – Address bar – evidence.com
    - 2) Enter your email address and click “GO”
    - 3) Select “uofcincinnati.evidence.com”
    - 4) Enter USERNAME and PASSWORD
    - 5) Select “SIGN IN”
    - 6) Select “EVIDENCE” in the tool bar
    - 7) Enter officer’s last name in the “OWNER” section – A drop down box with users will appear. Select the correct user name and then select “SEARCH”.
    - 8) Select the video to review from the list and double click to activate the video.
    - 9) Press the play button and review the video.
    - 10) The last step in completing the review is the “NOTES” section located at the bottom of the screen. Scroll down and click in the “Notes” section and add your notes. The NOTES section must be completed by a supervisor to complete the video review.
  - c. The approving or investigating supervisor shall review the associated BWC video/recordings for the following incidents (Mandatory Review Video):
    - 1) Arrests
    - 2) Citations
    - 3) Uses of Force
    - 4) Vehicle Pursuits
    - 5) Vehicle Accidents
    - 6) Traffic Stops
    - 7) Off-campus Pedestrian Stops
  - d. On a weekly basis, each patrol Lieutenant will review one (1) random non-mandatory IVRS or BWC video/recordings for at least one officer assigned to their shift.
  - e. On a weekly basis, each patrol Sergeant will review three (3) random non-mandatory IVRS or BWC video/recordings for officers assigned to their shift.
  - f. Weekly reviews will be conducted in a manner that ensures each officer assigned to the shift has at least one video reviewed each month.
  - g. All BWC videos/recordings reviewed will be placed into either the ‘Supervisor Reviewed – Action Taken’ or the ‘Supervisor Reviewed – No Action Taken’ categories in [evidence.com](http://evidence.com). The supervisor who completes the review will indicate whether the review was “mandatory” or “non-mandatory” (random) in evidence.com.
  - h. Appropriate corrective action must be taken immediately to address any concerns raised during the review. The level of action taken will depend

## ***Body Worn Camera Digital Recording System***

on the concern: actions inconsistent with policy that arise as a result of the supervisory review.

- 1) Minor policy violations and/or training issues: Counsel the officer and document concern and discussion in Guardian Tracking.
  - 2) Serious misconduct: Immediately notify his/her supervisor and document the finding on a [Complaint Form-15\(A\)](#).
  - 3) Any Complaint Form will then be investigated in accordance with UCPD policy 4.2.100 Internal Investigations and Complaints.
- i. Members of the Standards and Strategic Development Bureau will review the following specified videos/recordings, at a minimum;
- 1) Arrests
  - 2) Uses of Force
  - 3) Citizen Complaints
  - 4) Vehicle Pursuits
- j. On a quarterly basis, a member of the Standards and Strategic Development Bureau will conduct an audit of the BWC video logs to ensure supervisory reviews are being conducted in accordance with this policy. The results of the audit will be submitted to the Police Chief through the chain of command.
3. Review of BWC recordings are authorized by the Chief of Police for the following reasons:
    - a. To ensure the BWC system is working.
    - b. To assist with the writing of a report, supplement, or memorandum.
    - c. For evidentiary review and case preparation.
    - d. For Supervisory review of employee conduct and performance.
  4. In the below situations, officers may not review video footage unless explicit authorization is given by the Police Chief:
    - a. Any Citizen's Complaint
    - b. Any Internal Investigation
    - c. Any Criminal or Civil investigation of a member of the UCPD
    - d. Any Use of Force
    - e. Training/development issues related to a member of the UCPD
  5. Recordings will not be used or shown with the intent to ridicule or embarrass any employee.
  6. Employees shall not (attempt to) obtain or convert, for their personal use or for the unauthorized use of another person, any information obtained by a BWC system.
  7. Employees shall not make personal copies of recordings or attempt to upload recordings to social networking sites (e.g., Snapchat, Yik Yak, YouTube, Facebook, etc.).
  8. All BWC or IVRS videos that are requested as part of a public record request, will be viewed by the Captain of the Standard and Strategic Development Bureau, the Inspections Lieutenant, or the Patrol Captain or designee, for police quality before it is released to the Records Section to be redacted and sent out for the request.

## ***Body Worn Camera Digital Recording System***

- a. After review, public records request for video releases must be submitted through the normal Division records request process.
- b. After review, video recordings may be released to the Prosecutor through the normal evidentiary process.

### **H. BWC CATEGORIZING PROCESS**

1. The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system will generate a predetermined title for video. In the **absence** of a CAD generated title, the system administrator is responsible for the incident disposition will title the video.
  - a. The responsible system administrator shall also title any other officer whose BWC captured the incident with the same verbiage.

### **I. Approved Notes Format**

1. Reviewed by (your title and name), followed by **one** of the following three options:
  - a. "No Action Taken"
  - b. "Informal Action Taken" (include what action was taken, example "Coaching")
  - c. "Formal Action Taken" (include what action was taken, ex. IA, Guardian Tracking)
2. Select "Post Note" to complete your entry.

### **J. Command Staff Audit Review**

1. The following will be the procedure the Command Staff will use to generate an audit report to ensure supervisors are reviewing officer's videos:
  - a. Select "ADMIN" from the toolbar
  - b. Select "All Users"
  - c. Select the "USER NAME" to go to the "VIEW AUDIT TRAIL" page
  - d. Select the "VIEW AUDIT TRAIL"
  - e. Enter the Date Range and select File Type "PDF" then select "SUBMIT"

### References

UCPD Policy 4.2.100 Internal Investigations and Complaints  
UCPD Policy 9.1.701 In-Car Video Recording System (IVRS)