



**BODY-WORN  
CAMERA**

TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

BODY-WORN CAMERA SITE SPOTLIGHT

# PARK CITY, UT



## INTEGRATING BODY-WORN AND IN-CAR CAMERA SYSTEMS

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Park City, Utah, is known for its beautiful alpine scenery, its magnificent skiing, and as host of the Sundance Film Festival, but it was also one of the first US jurisdictions to implement body-worn cameras (BWCs). In 2013, the Park City Police Department (PCPD) decided BWCs might help its officers better serve their 8,000 full-time residents and the 100,000 tourists that descend on the city during peak season. They were right—after BWCs were deployed, uses of force dropped by 42 percent and complaints declined drastically. According to the city prosecutor, the courts also benefited. Clearance rates went up and trials using BWC evidence were stronger and shorter. However, as with most programs, BWCs come with both benefits and costs, and sometimes those costs are not anticipated. PCPD experienced these unanticipated costs firsthand.

The implementation of body-worn camera technology has significantly elevated the caliber of evidence for all criminal matters. In addition, body-worn cameras have increased the level of professionalism amongst our law enforcement officers and have reduced meritless claims.

— Tricia Lake, Park City  
Prosecuting Attorney

Five years after the initial deployment, PCPD found its BWCs to be outdated, in desperate need of repair, and no longer supported by the manufacturer. PCPD had also recently replaced its patrol fleet and installed new in-car (“dash”) cameras that could be synced with many new BWCs, but not with the old model. Officers were spending countless hours manually uploading and categorizing their videos into two different systems. The department knew it had to make this process more efficient, but its budget could not sustain both vehicle and BWC purchases. In 2018, the department applied for and received funding through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program (PIP). Through the BWC PIP, PCPD purchased 31 total cameras. The department currently has a total of 39 BWCs in use.

The PCPD, under the leadership of Captain Phil Kirk, quickly got to work choosing a vendor. The department had a long wish list, but its top priority was digital evidence integration. Syncing BWC videos with the existing in-car camera system would allow for continuous video coverage from in and around the vehicle to well outside the car perimeter. The PCPD saw clear advantage to having cameras capture footage from multiple vantage points at the same time. It also proposed that digital evidence integration would benefit the city prosecutor’s office. Captain Kirk stated, “we figured there would be a considerable amount of time and money saved by having attorneys review evidence on a single platform rather than having to sort through two different systems like we had been doing for years.”

With clear goals, the PCPD project team did its homework; the team went through vendor presentations and reached out to several other agencies. A visit to the Heber City, Utah, Police Department was especially helpful. Heber City had recently implemented cameras and the department was satisfied with the result. Captain Kirk said the following:

“I think it was that on-site visit to Heber City PD that was the clincher. They spent the time to show us how the WatchGuard system was working for them. They’re a smaller agency, slightly smaller than us, but they wanted the same thing from their BWC product. They had worked through some of the bugs, so that helped us see that this system could work for us and we had peers to guide us.

Not long after the visit to Heber City, PCPD entered a contract with the same vendor for cameras and technical assistance.

Since BWCs were business as usual for PCPD, implementation of the new cameras was relatively seamless. The same could not be said for the digital evidence integration system. To integrate the BWC and in-car camera platforms, the department had to build a network and data servers from scratch. This process took time, and for the first six months of database construction, officers and attorneys had to query three separate systems to pull video. Sergeant Rick Penrod describes early stages of the project as a series of two-steps forward, and one-step back:

“The initial network setup was really challenging. Since we were using our own servers with security and not the WatchGuard servers or cloud service, we ran into a lot of problems initially. The vendor sent out a technician for three days and by the end of the third day, our system was not operational. It took several months to get the entire system working smoothly so that BWC and vehicles would upload to the servers. They have been very helpful throughout all the set up and as we’ve encountered server issues.

Despite early challenges, three months after full system implementation, the department has worked out most of the bugs. Officers are now wirelessly uploading videos from their BWCs and in-car cameras into one integrated, on-site system. Anyone who has managed a system changeover can tell you this is an impressive feat, especially for a municipal law enforcement agency with 31 full-time sworn officers. Captain Kirk credits his BWC team for this success:

“Everyone working on the project had experience with BWCs and digital evidence management systems. That’s one of the benefits of starting on this journey back in 2013. I also can’t emphasize enough the importance of having a dedicated IT person and using our own servers. We got him (IT specialist) involved from the very beginning of the project, so we anticipated most of the early issues.

PCPD emphasizes three points for other departments adding digital evidence integration.



## THINK BIG

First, if possible, think big from the beginning. Sergeant Penrod recalls the difficulty going back and training officers on a new system after they had years of experience on the old one:

I think the ideal situation would be to start with the complete system so that everyone is on the same page. Officers that received the new BWC with a new dash camera with wireless connection had it much easier.



## BUILD A TEAM

Second, build a team with important people from both within and outside the department. Captain Kirk emphasizes the importance of the stakeholder approach:

Building a well-rounded team is critical. And the more invested they are from the beginning, the more you’ll avoid unanticipated problems and you’ll have people come up with innovative solutions. Like our IT department saying “Hey, we can save you a lot of money not having to go with cloud storage by providing you with our server.” Or like the attorneys giving us their input early on data transfer to the City Prosecutor’s Office. We’ve now incorporated “cloud sharing” based on their advice.



## DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Third, do your homework. Look at sister agencies that have experience in similar program implementations. Captain Kirk emphasizes the importance of not solely relying on vendors for information. Captain Kirk stated:

“The vendors, not that they’re dishonest, but they’re going to give you a perspective that’s advantageous to their company. If you talk with other agencies that have experienced this, then you can avoid some of the pitfalls.

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**For more information on the Park City Police Department BWC program, please contact:** Captain Phil Kirk, [pkirk@parkcity.org](mailto:pkirk@parkcity.org).

**To request training and technical assistance, email:** [BWCTTA@cna.org](mailto:BWCTTA@cna.org) **or visit our website:** [www.bwctta.com](http://www.bwctta.com).

For more information on the BJA Body-Worn Camera Training and Technical Assistance Initiative, contact:

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