

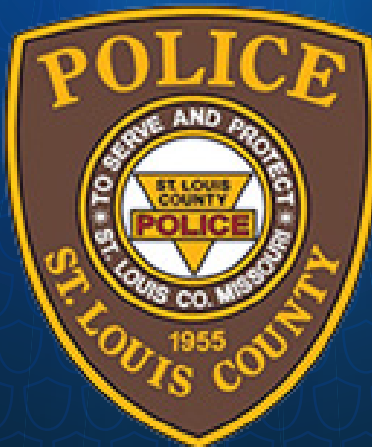


**BODY-WORN
CAMERA**
TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

SITE SPOTLIGHT

ST. LOUIS COUNTY

POLICE DEPARTMENT



FEBRUARY 2023

SITE SPOTLIGHT

ST LOUIS COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUMMARY

Spurred in part by a 2021 body-worn camera (BWC) grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance in 2021 (BJA BWCPJP Grant # 15P BJA-21-GG-04437-BWCX), Missouri's St. Louis County Police Department (SLCPD) expanded and refined its BWC program. Grant funding enabled SLCPD to acquire an additional 100 BWCs to expand deployment to all sworn personnel. Concurrent with this expansion, SLCPD developed helpful applications around their BWCs by integrating cameras from multiple sources into one readily accessible platform. The integration of BWCs with automated license plate readers (ALPRs), Missouri Department of Transportation highway cameras, and other video sources allows users to access video data from multiple sources. This integrated system is managed by the SLCPD Camera Systems Unit (CSU), which maintains the physical devices and processes all of the footage. In creating a single platform, SLCPD turned its BWC system into an application that improves operations, efficiency, and officer safety.

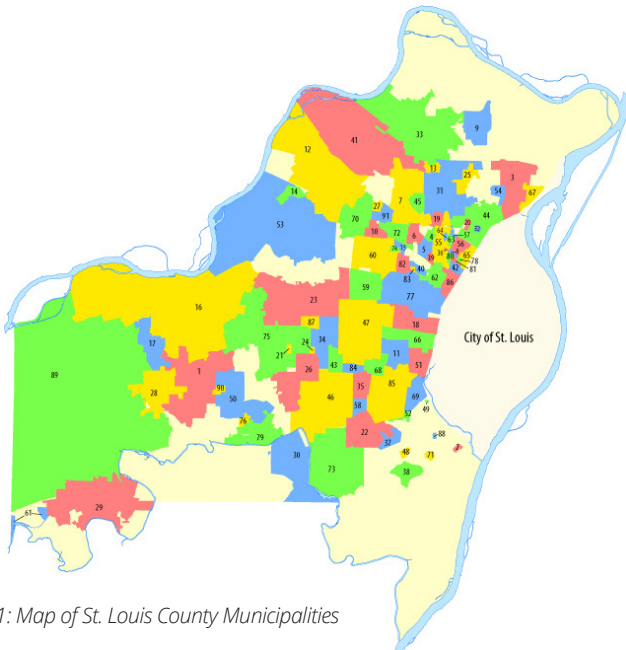


Figure 1: Map of St. Louis County Municipalities

SLCPD AND CAMERAS

As agencies across the United States continue to adopt BWCs as standard issue equipment, practitioners continually seek to maximize their functionality. Early iterations of BWC programs focused on transparency and accountability, particularly

872
OFFICERS



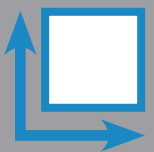
ALL
OFFICERS
EQUIPPED
WITH BWCs



1,211
TOTAL
EMPLOYEES



532
SQUARE
MILES IN THE
COUNTY



SUPPORT
SERVICES WITH
45
POLICE
AGENCIES



for use of force or critical incidents, but now technological advancements have increased the utility of BWCs in law enforcement operations beyond those initial goals.

SLCPD is a large agency with over 800 sworn officers covering a major metropolitan area with approximately 1 million residents. It provides sole law enforcement services to 13 municipalities and support services to 45 other municipalities in St. Louis County. Like many departments with jurisdiction in urban areas, SLCPD has overlapping responsibilities with neighboring law enforcement agencies and works to enhance coordination among them.

COORDINATION

Other local agencies have signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with SLCPD to share their location data and footage when agency responsibilities overlap. This data sharing and a built-in direct messaging system have made coordinating responses to inter-agency incidents easier. SLCPD deploys a BWC mounted inside each officer's uniform at chest level. This keeps the camera secure and makes it extremely unlikely to dislocate during physical altercations.¹ The cellular data allows for person-level tracking (PLT),

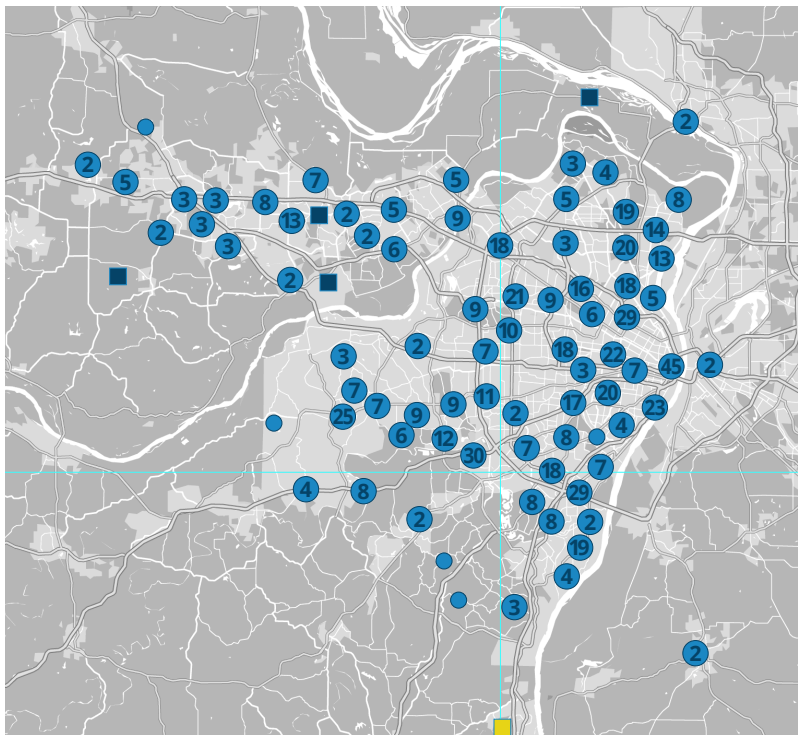


Figure 3: Person level tracking map view

¹ For more information on BWC mounting on different parts of an officer's uniform, look at our BWC training and technical assistance (TTA) mounting resource [here](#).



Figure 2: BWC, mount, and remote

which lets dispatchers and other administrators track the exact location of the device (and by extension the person equipped with it). During an active shooter incident that took place in April 2021, officers were able to communicate with each other and coordinate a response by using PLT data and the messaging system, something that was not previously available through the agencies' disparate dispatch systems (see Figure 3). Officers on scene were able to enhance their response to the critical incident by using the BWCs to strategize deployment and tactical approaches.

DATA INTEGRATION

SLCPD has succeeded in making multiple camera inputs work together in one system. The BWCs, vehicle-mounted cameras, and third-party devices can all connect to the evidence management platform. SLCPD installed two cameras in all patrol vehicles: one to capture the backseat and one front-facing external dashcam. An officer can upload live and recorded footage from their BWC or vehicle cameras to any mobile device or computer connected to the platform, allowing for immediate playback. One SLCPD officer explained that the backseat camera allowed him to monitor an arrestee while he oversaw the conclusion of the incident outside of the vehicle.

SLCPD is currently implementing smart interview rooms outfitted with repurposed dashboard cameras. They have been working closely with their vendor to develop new equipment specifically for their interview rooms going forward. Three of the eight St. Louis County precincts have had new cameras installed in the interview rooms and the hallways that connect to the same database as the BWCs. SLCPD can now capture recordings of an entire incident from an officer arriving on scene to transportation to the precinct, then movement from the vehicle to the interview room, and then finally the interview itself. Footage is automatically uploaded to the cloud storage system and can be viewed immediately after the recording ends. SLCPD plans to install these smart interview rooms in all precincts.

AUTOMATION

Automation reduces human error and can save time. After a recording has stopped, whether taken on the BWC or any of the other connected cameras, the footage is uploaded to a central database. In addition, this system has automatic triggers² to ensure the BWC is activated in a timely manner when arriving on a scene; some of these automatic triggers also help with officer safety. SLCPD's system has an "officer down" feature that will alert CSU and Dispatch if the device (and by extension the wearer) is horizontal for more than a minute. This, combined with the PLT feature, alerts CSU when an officer has gone down and is unresponsive while away from their vehicle. CSU can live stream the BWC footage when an officer is down to get a sense of the situation and advise responders on how to approach.



Figure 4: In-car camera, tablet, and computer

² For more information on automatic triggers, review our resource [In View: Body-Worn Camera Auto-Triggering Technologies | BWC TTA](#).

SUMMARY

While automation helps efficiency in the field, the technology still adds labor hours and costs to handle the processing and storage of footage. According to SLCPD, the benefit of increased officer safety and the evidentiary value of BWCs are worth the operational and maintenance costs. The BWCs and their features have been used in several critical incidents to date, including a shooting at a mall and an officer down incident, for coordination of resources and after-action reports. The footage often makes investigations more efficient because of the added digital evidence, and it saves time spent testifying in court. SLCPD has also used BWC footage in press releases, highlighting officers' actions in the field with positive reception.



Overall, the officers at SLCPD who spoke to CNA during a site visit in October 2022 feel that the BWC system makes their jobs easier and increases their personal safety. Department investment in the technical infrastructure as well as staff resources has allowed creative uses of the cameras and their data with practical results. Commitment and support from both the officers and the department leadership has led to a successful deployment of the camera system at SLCPD.

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