



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

BODY-WORN CAMERA TRAINING GUIDE

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The internet references cited in this publication were valid as of the date of publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the author(s) nor CNA, ASU, or JSS can vouch for their current validity.

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Introduction

The Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety at Arizona State University (ASU) has developed this facilitator’s guide and the accompanying training slides as resources for law enforcement agencies seeking to develop or modify their body-worn camera (BWC) training programs. These training materials should be used only as reference documents for agencies developing and deploying BWCs. They are intended to provide guidance and are not designed for yearly continuing training or academy use. Law enforcement agencies should alter the materials as they deem necessary to meet their agency and constituent needs, as well as local and state laws.

Supporting educational objectives of knowledge (cognitive), skills (psychomotor), and attitudes (affective), these training materials serve several purposes. First, the guide provides police instructors with a standardized BWC training template that includes an introduction to issues surrounding the development of BWCs, BWC specifications and operations (which vary by vendor), key issues in policy and practice, and topics related to agency accountability. Second, the guide provides learning objectives for each of these competency areas. Third, the guide and the accompanying slides provide a starting point for in-classroom and scenario-based instruction. Trainers should customize these materials to reflect agency policy, state law, and local ordinances.

These materials have been prepared as a technical assistance tool for the Bureau of Justice Assistance Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program (PIP), for which ASU, along with the CNA Institute for Public Research, and Justice and Security Strategies, Inc., provides training and technical assistance (TTA). They are the product of government, academic, and practitioner expertise in both police training and BWC programs. They mirror key policy and operational areas identified through the BJA PIP TTA program. The Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety acknowledges the support and feedback of the following agencies that provided their training curricula to assist in the development of the facilitator’s guide and accompanying slides:

- Denver, Colorado, Police Department
- New Orleans, Louisiana, Police Department
- Peoria, Arizona, Police Department
- Phoenix, Arizona, Police Department
- Spokane, Washington, Police Department
- Tempe, Arizona, Police Department
- Waynesboro, Virginia, Police Department

We take this opportunity to remind trainers of the importance of keeping training records (e.g., attendance, test results) in accordance with agency policy and Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requirements.

These materials have been prepared by Charles Katz, Michael White, and Jessica Herbert at the ASU Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety. The authors would like to thank Dan Zehnder, Dr. William Sousa, Chief Rick St. John, Thomas Woodmansee, and



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Module 1: Introduction and Background on Body-Worn Cameras

Learning Objectives

- Understanding camera use prior to police BWCs
- Understanding key events preceding BWC implementation
- Common goals for deploying BWCs
- Common concerns about police BWCs
- Understanding the research on BWCs
- Terms to know

BWC training should begin with a review of the role of cameras in policing generally (pre-BWC), as well as the key events and issues that have led to the spread of BWCs in American policing. Discussion of the evidentiary value of BWCs is an important backdrop for any training on BWCs.

Law enforcement agencies can develop a BWC program for any number of reasons, and there are numerous perceived benefits associated with BWC deployment. Trainers should cover the most common goals (evidentiary value, training, civil liability, transparency, and accountability) and then highlight how these issues link to the agency's primary goals. Two examples are included on slide 10 (Spokane [Washington] and Tempe [Arizona] Police Departments).

The following video clip is from a London Metropolitan Police promotional video designed to demonstrate the evidentiary value of BWCs. Video link: <https://youtu.be/epenl1bv6tw>

Trainers should also discuss the major challenges and concerns associated with BWCs, from citizen and officer privacy to citizen attitudes and the logistical and resource commitments required to manage a BWC program. It is helpful for trainers to cover some of the most common concerns and challenges, such as citizen privacy, officer privacy, limits of the technology, and potential communication problems between police and citizens.

The following video demonstrates a potential limitation of BWCs, namely, that footage can be misleading. The first portion depicts surveillance camera footage, while the second portrays the same incident from an officer's body camera. Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQpoxviob8w>

Establishing your training approach

Many BWC vendors will provide free training to the purchasing agency. This training is typically "off-the-shelf" and is not customized to the agency's policies, procedures, or other relevant local issues. We recommend that agencies use vendor training as a supplement to their own training programs and not rely solely on it.

Command staff should hand select agency trainers. These trainers should be relevant, well-regarded experts. For example, city attorneys might train officers on state laws and local ordinances that are applicable to BWCs. A well-regarded patrol sergeant might be groomed to train supervisors and officers on matters related to the auditing of BWC files by supervisors. Identifying and establishing internal BWC experts is an important first step in establishing a cultural that embraces a high quality BWC program.

There is a small but rapidly growing body of research on the effects of BWCs. Slides 12 and 13 review some of those studies as well as selected findings. A reference list of relevant studies is included below. Trainers should highlight that research has supported a number of the claims made about BWCs, including reductions in citizen complaints and uses of force by police, enhanced criminal justice case processing, and improved citizen attitudes about police. The research also shows that outcomes vary across agencies and that the likelihood of positive outcomes is greatly influenced by agency planning, training, adherence to policy, and program management.

It is also useful for trainers to go over the relevant key terms to ensure that all attendees understand the issues to be covered. We have included selected key terms from a handful of different agencies, but trainers should modify and expand the list based on their own policy and practice.

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Module 2: Body-Worn Camera Device Specifications and Operations

Learning Objectives

- Identify key operating functions of the hardware
- Identify key functionality of software
- Demonstrate how to activate and deactivate the BWC
- Demonstrate how to dock BWC and transfer files
- Demonstrate how to charge the BWC

It is important that trainers provide hands-on instruction with the actual device and vendor that the agency has selected. BWC specifications and operation will vary significantly by BWC vendor, and the training should be tailored as needed. Many of the vendors offer their own training, which may or may not be provided as part of the contract negotiated through the procurement process.

The following video addresses the quality of BWC footage depending on where the camera is mounted. In a simulated foot pursuit, the viewer is able to see what the camera picks up when mounted on an officer's chest, hat, glasses, and shoulders. Video link: <https://youtu.be/2VcHqMx9efk>

There are more than 50 vendors in the BWC market now. See the recently published Market Survey from the National Institute of Justice for information on vendors and their products (<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/250381.pdf>).

Agency training instructors should insert the applicable vendor slides on operations. It is important to emphasize that agencies should inspect and assess the quality and applicability of vendor training materials. Too many agencies adopt the “one-size-fits-all” training provided by their vendor. Trainers should work with their vendor to further develop this training module.

Note: Resources provided in this module of the training slide deck are available through open-source or through government-funded research. The slides are for educational purposes only and are provided as one example of how to construct this training module. The use of slides from a specific police agency does NOT reflect an endorsement or preference by the training and technical assistance team (CNA, ASU, Justice and Security Strategies) or the US Department of Justice.

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Module 3: Body-Worn Camera Policy and Practice

Learning Objectives

Review the following:

- Authorized users
- Pre- and post-shift inspection
- Officer responsibilities
- Investigator responsibilities
- When to activate BWC
- When to deactivate BWC
- Discretionary activation and deactivation
- When BWC use is restricted or prohibited
- Officer review of BWC footage
- When citizens are to be notified about BWC activation
- Data transfer, download, and report writing
- Data storage and retention
- Release of captured video
- State law (e.g., public recording, public disclosure)

It is critical that training instructors review and discuss the agency's BWC policy. This training module should be modified based on local agency policy. The training should also include scenario-based exercises that address key policy issues.

For each of the 13 learning objectives, we provide examples culled from the training curricula of a handful of partner agencies. The examples provided (see the individual slides for agency attribution) are not intended as endorsements of policy positions on those specific issues. The TTA team and the Bureau of Justice Assistance offer recommendations only on the comprehensiveness of issues covered in training and policy. The directionality of specific issues (e.g., when to activate and whether officers should advise citizens of the BWC) should be determined at the local level through law enforcement agency collaboration and consultation with both internal and external stakeholders.

Below is a brief review of the issues that should be covered under each learning objective:

- *Authorized users.* Who is assigned a BWC? Is it required or optional? Are there conditions for voluntary wearing? Are there any requirements before being assigned a BWC (e.g., training)? Are privately owned BWCs permitted? Are there any requirements or restrictions for BWC use for outside employment?
- *Pre- and post-shift inspection.* Specific responsibilities before and after a shift, such as general care; examination for malfunctions, charging, and damage; and requirements if problems are detected.



- *Officer responsibilities.* Specific responsibilities for BWC use, such as maintenance and care, documentation in reports when a BWC is activated, and proper wearing and use.
- *Investigator responsibilities.* Specific responsibilities for accessing and using BWC footage by detectives or criminal investigators.
- *When to activate BWC.* Specific guidance on the types of contacts or calls in which BWC activation is mandatory. This may include a general statement about contacts (e.g., all law enforcement contacts) or a specific list of call types, depending on agency policy. Trainers should also discuss when to activate (when the call is received by the officer, at the beginning of the encounter, or as soon as practical).
- *When to deactivate BWC.* Specific guidance on when officers are authorized to deactivate the BWC. This can include a general statement (when the contact is over), as well as specific guidance based on the nature of the contact (e.g., transportation of suspect) or the location of the contact (medical facility or other locations where deactivation is required).
- *Discretionary activation and deactivation.* If the agency policy provides for officer discretion with BWC activation and deactivation, the department should review and clearly identify the circumstances surrounding the appropriate use of discretion. This may involve interviews with victims, witnesses, and confidential informants, as well as specific requests from citizens for deactivation.
- *When BWC use is restricted or prohibited.* There are likely numerous circumstances that restrict or prohibit BWC use, and trainers should review those circumstances. This may include certain locations (in locker rooms or bathrooms) or interactions with certain individuals (supervisors or confidential informants). Additionally, training should include a review of circumstances in which activation is impractical or presents a risk to officer safety.

Consider training non-police personnel

We recommend that your agency consider incorporating BWC training and discussions with citizen academies, media educational events, prosecutor and defense attorney continuing educational sessions, and other outreach forums to inform non-police personnel about policies and practices to foster reasonable expectations of your BWC program.

This clip shows officers discussing a recent arrest and includes discussion related to charging deliberations. Some agencies dictate in policy that officers turn cameras off for these types of discussions. Video link:

<https://youtu.be/ExJDcDaXhJ8>

- *Officer review of BWC footage.* Trainers should review the conditions under which officers have the authority to review their own BWC footage. The training should address routine review to assist in completing reports, preparing for court testimony, and so forth. Many (but not all) agencies allow for such review. Do officers have authority to review the BWC footage of fellow officers? The requirements for accessing other officers' BWC footage should be covered. Policy often asks officers to think about the training value of specific videos, and officers should be briefed on the requirements surrounding this issue. The rules governing officer review of BWC footage following a critical incident may be different; the training should cover these rules. Supervisor requirements in the event of a critical incident are covered in Module 4.
- *When citizens are to be notified about BWC activation.* Department policy on citizen notification often is grounded in state law on the recording of conversations (e.g., one-party or two-party consent states). Many two-party consent states (i.e., both parties must be aware of and consent to a recording of the conversation) have created exemptions for police officers. Trainers could cover the relevant state law as well as the department policy on citizen notification. In some cases, state law and policy may be different. For example, some law enforcement agencies recommend (see the Tempe policy on slide 45) or even mandate their officers to advise citizens of the BWC, even if state law does not require it. The rationale for citizen advisement is grounded in the idea that the perceived benefits of BWCs (such as reduced citizen complaints, enhanced legitimacy and officer safety) will not be achieved (or will be less efficiently achieved) if a citizen is unaware of the BWC. Trainers should also review officer responsibilities if a citizen asks about the BWC (assuming advisement has not already occurred).
- *Data transfer, download, and report writing.* Trainers should review the requirements for tagging videos, data transfer, and report writing. This includes the tagging categories, the process of tagging videos, how to change tagging categories (in the event of a mistake), how to handle accidental recordings, what to do in the event of a failure to record (e.g., supervisor notification), how to access BWC footage for report writing (if permitted), when download should occur (e.g., by end of shift), and how to download. They should cover prohibitions against tampering and destruction of the device and improper viewing of, copying, tampering with, and deleting BWC footage. They should also emphasize that BWC video does not relieve officers of the responsibility for writing thorough reports.
- *Data storage and retention.* Trainers should review the location and type of data storage used by the law enforcement agency, the security measures accompanying the storage solution, the retention schedule for BWC footage



(and the connection to video tagging), and relevant state and local laws governing evidence retention.

- *Release of captured video.* Trainers should review the process by which citizens, media, and other groups can request BWC footage. The training should highlight the role of the individual officer in this process, the chain of command and who has authorization to release (and who does not have authorization to release), requirements for redaction, and relevant state law governing the request and release of BWC footage. They should also cover procedures for “downstream” criminal justice actors (prosecutors, defense) to request or gain access to relevant BWC footage.

The following is an example of a video that has been redacted to obscure the citizen’s face. Video link: <https://youtu.be/UvOnLcs8y9I>

- *Scenario-based training.* Classroom-based instruction on operational and policy issues related to BWCs is an important first step, but such instruction should be followed with active, scenario-based training that reinforces and demonstrates the principles covered in the classroom. Proper BWC use during day-to-day activities is not part of officers’ “muscle memory,” and there will be a learning curve for most officers. The learning curve can be expedited through scenario-based training with post-scenario debriefs. See slide 49 for one example from the Spokane, Washington, Police Department. Trainers should incorporate BWCs into all scenario-based trainings utilized during Pre-Services and In-Services, such as tactics, firearms, and emergency vehicle operations.

Module 4: Agency Accountability

Learning Objectives

- Supervisor access to BWC data
- Use of BWC data for policy compliance and performance evaluations
- BWC data for critical incidents
- Supervisor responsibilities

One of the primary perceived benefits of BWCs is their utility as a mechanism for enhanced accountability. This most commonly involves first-line supervisor review of BWC footage. In a recent review of more than 50 administrative policies, White et al. (2016)¹ found that agencies typically allow supervisors to engage in three types of review:

1. Administrative Review

Example: A supervisor may review specific BWC media or data for training, civil claims, and administrative inquiry.

2. Compliance Review

Example: Every month, supervisors will randomly review 10 recordings pertaining to their areas of responsibility to ensure that the equipment is operating properly and that officers are using the cameras appropriately and in accordance with policy and training.

3. Performance Review

Example: Supervisors will conduct random weekly reviews of selected recordings to assess deputy performance and identify videos that may be appropriate for training.

Line officers should fully understand the authority of supervisors to access and review BWC footage. Each of the three types of review (administrative, compliance, performance) should be explained. Training should also cover the consequences for policy violations—both violations of the BWC policy and other violations that are discovered during review of BWC footage. It may be useful for trainers to provide a copy of the policy and explain the process by which the administrative policy governing supervisor review was established (e.g., the role of the union, fellow line officers, relevant local and state laws, and standard practices in other agencies).

Moreover, supervisors will require a separate training on their authority and responsibilities for review of BWC footage. The training should address logistical issues (e.g., how and when to access footage); requirements for routine inspection of BWC hardware; procedures following a citizen or internal complaint; procedures following a use of force incident; and requirements for policy compliance and, if applicable, performance review. Trainers should brief supervisors on the consequences for improper access of BWC footage.

¹ http://bwctta.com/sites/default/files/Files/Resources/BWC%20Policy%20Analysis%20Final%2011-16_o.pdf

Many law enforcement agencies have developed separate procedures for critical incidents (e.g., officer-involved shooting). Key issues following a critical incident include officer authority to review the BWC footage, when the officer can review the footage (before or after making a statement), other conditions for officer review (union representative present, where the review will occur), who takes possession of the BWC and when; the investigation process, and who outside of the agency has authority to view the BWC footage (and when). Both officers and supervisors should be properly trained in the post-critical incident process.

Additional Resources and Readings

There are a variety of resources now available on police use of BWCs. The slides in this module highlight some of those resources, all of which are free and publicly available. In particular, trainers should highlight the US Department of Justice National Body-Worn Camera Toolkit (<https://www.bja.gov/bwc/>) and the National Body-Worn Camera Training and Technical Assistance team (<http://www.bwctta.com/>).

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Example of Review Test Questions

The New Orleans Police Department has developed a set of test questions for training attendees. Those questions are provided in slides 64–69. Lt. Dan Zehnder of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department also developed a scenario-based exercise that can be used to “test” training attendees on their understanding of the material presented. That exercise is provided at the end of the presentation.