



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

# **BODY WORN CAMERA TRAINING GUIDE (DRAFT)**

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## Introduction

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The Center of Violence Prevention and Community Safety of Arizona State University has developed this facilitator guide and training slides as a resource for law enforcement agencies seeking to develop or modify their body-worn camera (BWC) training program. These training materials have been prepared as a technical assistance tool for the Bureau of Justice Assistance Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program (PIP). ASU is part of the Training and Technical Assistance team for the PIP program (along with CNA and JSS). This guide and supporting training slides should be only used as a reference document for agencies in developing and deploying BWCs for their agency. The materials are intended to provide guidance only. Law enforcement agencies should alter the materials as they deem necessary to meet the needs of their agency and constituents, as well as local and state law.

These materials have been prepared by Charles Katz, Michael White, and Jessica Herbert, from the Center of Violence Prevention and Community Safety at Arizona State University to support the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program (PIP).

The materials provided within this guide and supplemental training slides support educational objectives tied to knowledge (cognitive), skills (psychomotor), and attitudes (affective). These training materials serve several purposes.

- First, this guide provides police instructors with content for a standardized BWC training template. This training template provides agencies with an overview of BWC competencies, including: an introduction to issues surrounding the development of BWCs; specifications and operations (which vary by vendor); key issues in policy and practice; and topics related to agency accountability.
- Second, this guide provides learning objectives for each of the aforementioned competency areas.
- Third, this guide and the supporting slides provide a starting point for in-classroom and scenario-based instruction. These materials should be changed by trainers to reflect agency policy, state law, and local ordinances.

The BWC training materials are a result of government, academic, and practitioner expertise in both police training and BWC programs. Training modules mirror key policy and operational areas identified through the BJA PIP TTA program. The Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety acknowledge the support and feedback of the following agencies who provided their training curricula to assist in the development of the Facilitator Guide and Training Slides:

- Denver Police Department (CO)
- New Orleans Police Department (LA)
- Peoria Police Department (AZ)
- Phoenix Police Department (AZ)

- Spokane Police Department (WA)
- Tempe Police Department (AZ)
- Waynesboro Police Department (VA)

## Module 1: Introduction and Background on BWCs

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### 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. The national-level discussion of race relations in policing 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 the deployment of BWCs. Trainers should cover the most common goals (transparency, accountability, evidentiary value, etc.), and then highlight with officers the primary goals of their agency. Two examples are included on slide 10 (Spokane [WA] and Tempe [AZ] Police Departments).

Trainers should also discuss the major challenges/concerns associated with BWCs, from citizen and officer privacy to citizen attitudes and the logistical/resource commitment required to manage a BWC program.

There is a small but rapidly growing body of research on the impact 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 reduced citizen complaints and use 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 the likelihood of positive outcomes is greatly influenced by agency planning, training, policy, and program management.

It is also useful for trainers to go over the relevant key terms to insure 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.

## Bibliography for BWC Research

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Jennings, W. G., Lynch, M. D., & Fridell, L. A. (2015). Evaluating the impact of police officer body-worn cameras (BWCs) on response-to-resistance and serious external complaints: Evidence from the Orlando Police Department (OPD) experience utilizing a randomized controlled experiment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(6), 480–486.

Katz, C. M., Choate, D. E., Ready, J. T., & Nuño, L. (2014). *Evaluating the impact of officer worn body cameras in the Phoenix police department*. Phoenix, AZ: Center for Violence Prevention & Community Safety, Arizona State University.

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White, M. D. (2014). *Police officer body-worn cameras: Assessing the evidence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

White, M. D., Todak, N., & Gaub, J. E. (forthcoming). Assessing citizen perceptions of body-worn cameras after encounters with police. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*.

## Module 2: BWC Device Specifications and Operations

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### Learning Objectives

- Identify key operating functions of the hardware
- Identify key functionality of software
- Demonstrate how to activate & deactivate BWC
- Demonstrate how to dock BWC/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.

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. In this module we provide an example of what could be covered using slides from one popular vendor (TASER International). 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 via 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 this specific vendor does NOT reflect an endorsement or preference for this vendor by the Training and Technical Assistance team (CNA, Arizona State University, Justice and Security Strategies) or the U.S. Department of Justice.*

## Module 3: BWC Policy and Practice

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### Learning Objectives

Review the following:

- Authorized users
- Pre-post shift inspection
- Officer responsibilities
- Investigator responsibilities
- When to activate BWC
- When to de-activate BWC
- Discretionary activation/de-activation
- 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

It is critically important for training instructors to 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 addresses key policy issues.

For each of the 13 learning objectives, we have provided 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 Bureau of Justice Assistance (US DOJ) only offer recommendations on the comprehensiveness of issues covering in training and policy. The directionality of specific issues (e.g., when to activate; should officers advise citizens of the BWC, etc.) 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? Conditions for voluntary wearing? Any requirements before being assigned a BWC (e.g., training); Are private-owned BWCs permitted?
- Pre-post shift inspection- Specific responsibilities before and after a work shift such as: general care; examination for malfunctions, charging, damage; requirements in the event problems are detected.
- Officer responsibilities- Specific responsibilities for use of the BWC such as maintenance and care; documentation in reports when a BWC is activated; proper wearing and use, etc.

- 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, as soon as practical, etc.).
- When to de-activate BWC- Specific guidance regarding 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 on the contact (medical facility or other locations where deactivation is required).
- Discretionary activation/de-activation- If the agency policy provides for officer discretion with BWC activation and deactivation, the circumstances surrounding the appropriate use of discretion should be reviewed. This may involve interviews with victims, witnesses, and confidential informants, as well as specific requests from citizens for de-activation. It may also include a general statement about the BWC impeding the officer's ability to carry out his/her duties.
- When BWC use is restricted or prohibited- There are likely numerous circumstances when the use of BWCs is restricted or prohibited, and trainers should review those circumstances. This may include certain locations (in locker rooms, bathrooms) or interactions with certain individuals (supervisors or confidential informants, etc.), as well as a general statement about officer safety (if activation is impractical or presents a risk to officer safety).
- Officer review of BWC footage- Trainers should review the conditions where officers have the authority to review their own BWC footage. The training should address routine review to assist in the completion of reports, preparation for court testimony, etc. 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 following a critical incident may be different, and if so, the rules should be covered. 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 regarding 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 (reduced citizen complaints, enhanced legitimacy, etc.) will not be achieved if a citizen is unaware of the BWC. Trainers should also review officer responsibilities in the event a citizen asks about the BWC (assuming advisement has not occurred previously).
- Data transfer, download, and report writing- Trainers should review the requirements for tagging of 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. Prohibitions against improper viewing, copying, tampering, and deleting BWC footage should also be covered.
- 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, requirements for redaction, and relevant state law governing the request and release of BWC footage. Procedures for “downstream” criminal justice actors (prosecutors, defense) to request or gain access to relevant BWC footage should also be covered.
- 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 use of the BWC 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 (WA) Police Department.

## Module 4: Agency Accountability

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### 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 involves 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) 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 the purpose of training, civil claims, and administrative inquiry.

#### 2. *Compliance Review*

Example: Monthly, supervisors will randomly review 10 recordings pertaining to his/her area of responsibility to ensure that the equipment is operating properly and that officers are using the cameras appropriately and in accordance with this policy and training

#### 3. *Performance Review*

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

([http://bwctta.com/sites/default/files/Files/Resources/BWC%20Policy%20Analysis%20Final%2011-16\\_o.pdf](http://bwctta.com/sites/default/files/Files/Resources/BWC%20Policy%20Analysis%20Final%2011-16_o.pdf))

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 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 law, standard practices in other agencies, etc.).

Moreover, supervisors will require a separate training governing their authority and responsibilities for review of BWC footage. The training should address logistical issues (e.g., how and when access footage), requirements for routine inspection of BWC

hardware, procedures following a citizen or internal complaint, procedures following a use of force, and requirements for policy compliance and if applicable, performance review. Supervisors should also be briefed on the consequences for improper access of BWC footage.

Many law enforcement agencies have developed separate procedures following a critical incident (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, etc.); 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

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There are a variety of resources now available regarding police use of BWCs, and 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 BWC Training and Technical Assistance team (<http://www.bwctta.com/>).

## Example of Review Test Questions

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The New Orleans Police Department has developed a set of test questions for training attendees to answer after the training is completed. Those questions are provided in slides 64-69. Scenario-based exercises can also be used to “test” training attendees on their understanding of the material presented.