

METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT – CITY OF ST. LOUIS

Intra-Department Report and Correspondence Sheet

Date: December 21, 2015
To: Col. D. Samuel Dotson
Commissioner of Police
From: Will Werner
Police Planner
Subject: BWC Pre-Survey

Copies:

Sir,

The purpose of this memo is to update you on the results of the week one surveys regarding BWCs. At 7am Monday, December 21, 2015, 45.8% of Sergeants wearing issued BWCs had completed the survey. The numbers of surveys completed by Assignment Code are as follows:

Assignment	Number of Responses
301	0
302	2
303	1
304	3
305	2
306	1
340	1
341	1

While every participant is not filling out the survey, we are getting really good feedback from those that are. Given the “forced” responses from week one, I would like to keep the survey as is and allow those that are responding to continue to and those that are not to respond if they decide to. It is clear from the responses those that are told to complete it, because the leave no comments and rate everything statement as “neutral”. The questions requiring a written response, again, provided some interesting feedback from officers. Their responses are included.

It is clear from responses to the survey and contacts made last week that there needs to be a more substantial and hands on training for the officers wearing cameras. There is still a large amount of confusion with the devices, evidence.com, and the Department’s SO.

Cameras are being used. The first week of deployment generated 97 videos totaling 12.61 hours (9.14 gigabytes).

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Respectfully,

Will Werner

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The below table is a list of questions with the average response from the officers that completed the survey. A rating of 3 is neutral. The higher the score the more officers DISAGREED with the statement. The LOWER the score the more they AGREED.

The rating scale is as follows:

1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly Disagree

Question	Pre-Test Average	Week 1 Average	Change
I spend less time completing paperwork with a BWC	3.64	3.85	0.21
My accounts of incidents are more accurate with a BWC	2.86	2.69	-0.17
Evidence quality is better with a BWC	2.64	2.54	-0.10
I would voluntarily wear a BWC even if it was not mandatory	3.73	3.46	-0.27
BWC's make my job easier	3.57	3.69	0.12
BWC's make it easier to work with the CAO during warrant application	2.86	2.92	0.06
Citizens are more cooperative when they know I wear a BWC	3.36	2.77	-0.59
Citizens are more respectful when they know I wear a BWC	3.36	2.85	-0.51
Suspects resist arrest MORE when they know I wear a BWC	3.07	3.23	0.16
Suspects are generally MORE AGGRESSIVE when they know I wear a BWC	3.15	3.23	0.08
BWC's hurt 'police-community' relations	3.27	3.46	0.19
Cameras will increase citizen complaints against officers	3.31	3.62	0.31
Officers will be less likely to give warnings while wearing a BWC	2.88	2.69	-0.19
Officers will have fewer contacts with citizens	2.56	2.38	-0.18
Officers will feel like they have less discretion	1.56	1.69	0.13
Officers will be more cautious in making decisions	2.25	1.92	-0.33
Officers will act more professionally	2.63	2.54	-0.09
BWC's affect an officer's decision to use force	2.31	2.38	0.07
It is easy to locate and retrieve video for a specific event	2.86	2.38	-0.48
BWC Equipment is easy to use	2.8	2.77	-0.03
BWC Equipment is comfortable to wear	3.27	3.46	0.19
Battery life of the camera is adequate	2.93	2.62	-0.31
Video is easy to download data at the end of shift	2.93	2.08	-0.85
The SO is easy to understand	2.73	2.85	0.12
The SO is too restrictive; officers are required to record too much	2.93	3.38	0.45
The SO is too detailed	3.27	3.46	0.19
Body cameras are well received by coworkers	4.38	4.08	-0.30
Police benefit more from body cameras than citizens	3.13	2.77	-0.36
Wearing a BWC improves officers' job satisfaction	4	3.92	-0.08
Cameras improve officer training	2.67	2.69	0.02

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Cameras improve overall job performance	3.56	3.23	-0.33
Cameras tend to increase office safety	3.56	3.00	-0.56
Cameras should be expanded to other police departments	3.38	3.46	0.08
Cameras should be worn by all sworn officers in all Police Departments	3.81	3.69	-0.12
Advantages of body cameras outweigh the disadvantages	3.31	3.15	-0.16
The training I received on the technology and SO was adequate	2.94	2.92	-0.02
The training I received on the SO was adequate	3.38	3.31	-0.07

Responses for questions requiring a written response are listed below.

Please indicate what you believe to be the STRENGTHS of wearing a BWC.

- *The only strength about the flex is that you can wear it on personal glasses. It moves a bit, but not terribly. A bit cyborg, but it works.*
- *CYA*
- *BWCs should assist users with recalling events.*
- *Increase report accuracy and testimony of officers.*
- *Can de-escalate situations.*
- *It can be used to capture the demeanor of a suspect at a scene and any statements he/she is making.*
- *I believe the strengths are that officers will be more careful and cautious in their actions and safety tactics when a BWC is present.*
- *recording of events accurately*
- *decrease citizens false allegations on officers*
- *A camera depicts the actual, and true events that took place on a scene. Often, Officers are given several conflicting statements by parties during a call, and the camera will show the actual events and record the true statements. This is good; however it may hinder an Officer and their use of discretion.*
- *I believe the body camera has the potential to be a useful tool in corroborating Officers' statements at the Circuit Attorney's Office and later a trial.*
- *There are multiple uses for the body cameras based on the type of body camera.*
- *Makes citizens more aware of their actions.*
- *None*

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Please indicate what you believe to be the WEAKNESSES of wearing a BWC.

- *Functionality while wearing the flex. I am smaller framed so most everything is close together. The piece that goes around the neck & magnets are cumbersome to me. Frankensteinish also! I changed it to the epilate and that was ok, but realized if I put my coat on, it won't work. Put it back on the collar w/o the neck piece. Better, less cumbersome, but also realized that w a coat on that it will get covered up. This will also apply to the people wearing the body cam. There is no place to put the device on outerwear. I would like to suggest Taser look into wireless connections between the camera and pack on the flex. That extra wire is a pain especially when trying to disconnect to use the facilities.*
- *Another weakness is when wearing the flex with the magnets. The magnets are weak and the camera can easily fall off during any type of scuffle or be grabbed off a person and used as a weapon to stab someone in the face.*
- *Misinterpretation*
- *Officers will feel there is no discretion with BWCs.*
- *Makes officers second guess themselves which greatly decreases officer safety in life and death situations wherein a delay in making decisions due to fear of reprisals could cost a life.*
- *Worrying about the camera angle and if its capturing the incident in another distraction that decreases officer safety.*
- *As a Sergeant, the camera creates a discomfort and distraction among the officers. The camera hinders my ability to perform my role as a supervisor when interacting with the officers. Some questions I would normally ask, to assess what needs to be addressed at a scene, I hesitate to ask, in order not to jeopardize the investigation or identify confidential information. I feel that the use of the camera can create patterns that will be used by defense attorneys to defend their clients. For example, if I were to conduct ten car stops for traffic and not write any tickets, than on the tenth stop, I find drugs, and I arrest the subject and write a probable cause ticket. I can see an attorney making an argument by using the nine previous stops. By videotaping any scene I arrive on, I am ultimately identifying all of the Under Cover Cars we use as well as the Detectives. The tactics we use may also be compromised as well.*
- *I feel that I am paying more attention to what the camera is or is not recording instead of concentrating on the events occurring during my stop or investigation. It feels unnatural and I am constantly thinking of what I may do or say is not approved by individuals who are not accustomed to dealing with potential violent suspects on the street.*
- *using safe tactics when operating the camera*
- *makes officers hesitant*
- *Officers tend to be more hesitant to use discretion with a camera on scene.*

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- *The camera can be a little cumbersome, due to the fact that there are two separate components that have to be connected with a wire.*
- *Officers have less discretion*
- *The light is distracting. It is in the way. The outer garment of the uniform does not allow an area to clip the camera onto.*

Please generally describe your experience wearing the BWC during the pilot period.

- *Still getting used to wearing it.*
- *not worn*
- *The camera seems easy to use.*
- *The battery life on standby flashed at 40% after only 4 hours on stand by. To be clear, the camera was not turned on at all. This is contrary to the 12 hours of battery life advertised by the company. After recharging and seeing a solid yellow on the previous shift, the Flex cam was a solid red on today's date- not blinking. Also, the 70 degree field of view is inadequate to capture relevant events when worn on your collar and blading your body.*
- *I find the device to be uncomfortable and creates a distrust among everyone I come in contact with who does not wish to be recorded. Even when the device is not recording.*
- *It definitely takes some time to get use to. I don't feel natural. I feel like I am acting and am apprehensive to do any thing outside of the box when it comes to interviewing or interrogating suspects.*
- *I have to remember to turn the camera on*
- *BWC was a little cumbersome*
- *The camera has not seemed to affect my job or my Officers job. I demand my Officers act professionally at all times and work with a high level of ethics.*
- *Because I had lasik surgery a few years ago, I don't like wearing the FLEX glasses/camera at night. I think the Body Flex would be good for everyday use and the Flex would be good for Tactical use.*
- *It is difficult to remove the camera from the holder. The holders are awkward to attach to your uniform.*
- *The blinking light bothered me (night watch). The sound cut out during the video. The wind is very loud in the background. My placement of the camera cut off the heads of people in the video.*

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Please list any changes to the proposed policy/SO you would make.

- *None at this time. Perhaps allow discretion to deactivate the camera when speaking with attorneys or writing down sensitive information, such as police officer's phone numbers.*
- *The use of the Camera should be voluntary and at the discretion of the officer.*
- *use the video as the narrative for a report*
- *Where in a domestic incident, when you only have the victim, can you indicate that video was taken and seized as evidence.*

Please list any other information you believe is relevant to this pilot program.

- *BWC have pro's and con's*
- *The mounting system for the body-mounted camera doesn't allow for the device to be mounted on a coat or jacket. This is an issue because it's cold outside.*
- *Also, the flex camera cord is too long and gets tangled among the other numerous items on my duty belt.*
- *When worn on the collar, both magnets interfere with using the phone, both the land line as well as the cell phone. This decreases productivity as you can not type or write easily when on the phone.*
- *There needs to be more hands on training before the department places a camera on an officer. None of the downloading or identifying the videos was explained or demonstrated.*
- *The general consensus from the public I have received is not all positive. I have found several people on calls and in passing that have asked about the camera. Several citizens on calls have told me they do not like being filmed.*
- *There should be more classifications of incidents.*
- *I don't like wearing the camera.*