

Athens-Clarke County Police Department

Title: On-Officer Cameras	Directive Number: A1/02/18
Issued Date: October 3, 2014	Section: Policy / General Policy Statements
Revised Date: N/A	Approved By: Chief Joseph H. Lumpkin, Sr.

I. PURPOSE

To provide officers with the necessary procedures for the use of wearable video recorders (WVRs), as with the Taser Flex Camera's use, as well as the management, storage, and retrieval of audio/video media recorded by such WVRs.

II. POLICY

The use of wearable video recorders (WVR), as with the Taser Flex Camera systems, provides recorded video and audio documentation of interactions between police personnel and the community. Such documentation serves many benefits to include documentary evidence to an arrest or citation, resolution of allegations of officer misconduct and support for officer training. Officers assigned the use of these devices shall adhere to the operational objectives and procedures outlined herein so as to maximize the effectiveness and utility for the WVR/Taser Flex Cam and the integrity of evidence and related video documentation. It is recognized that WVRs do not solve all areas of interests.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Recorded media: Audio/video signals recorded on any of several storage devices including hard drives, analog tape, digital tape, digital video disks (DVD), memory cards, or other portable digital devices.

B. Wearable Video Recorder (WVR): This refers to a system securely worn on the officer's body with a camera mounted on/adjacent to the officer's head. The system captures audio and video.

C. Taser Flex Cam: This refers to a system sold by TASER International, Inc. worn on the officer's body with a camera mounted on/adjacent to the officer's head. The system captures audio and video.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Objectives: The department has adopted the use of the WVR and Flex Cam to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To enhance officer safety.
2. To accurately capture statements and events during the course of an incident.
3. To enhance the officer's ability to document and review statements and actions for both internal reporting requirements and for courtroom preparation and presentation.
4. To provide an impartial measurement for self-critique and evaluation during field training

5. To capture visual and audio evidence/information for use in current and future investigations.

B. User Responsibilities

1. The WVR and/or Flex Cam should be activated (audio and video) for all incidents involving citizen contact. Any reason for failing to activate the camera system shall be reasonable and able to be articulated upon supervisory review.

2. When the WVR and/or Flex Cam is activated, the user shall carry and activate the appropriate audio transmitter to ensure that all events are properly documented. Users are encouraged, but not required, to narrate events using the audio recording, so as to provide the best documentation for pretrial and courtroom presentation.

3. When the WVR and/or Flex Cam is activated to document an event, it shall not be deactivated until the event has been concluded unless a situation occurs where stopping the WVR or Flex Cam is warranted per a thoughtful, reasonable, prudent and transparent decision. The intention to stop either audio and/or video recording shall be noted by the user verbally, visually or in written notation. Every intentional or unintentional deactivation of the WVR or Flex Cam during citizen encounters shall be reported to a supervisor and documented by the supervisor as a significant incident that is copied to the failing member's electronic performance file. Failure of the officer to record citizen encounters may create the perception of officer misconduct. Proper documentation must be shown during times of equipment failure.

4. When necessary to ensure accuracy and consistency of accounts for written reports, users may review recordings using the "Playback" function on the WVR or through the Flex Cam smart phone application. If the user needs to view outside the "Playback" function then she/he should contact a supervisor and request to review recordings. If the user is the highest ranking supervisor on-duty, review will be made with a person holding the rank of sergeant or above. A MDT that is not connected to a "hardline fiber connection" at a workstation is not to be used for such review for that may negatively affect connectivity of all MDT users.

5. With the exception of police radios, users shall ensure that the volume from other electronic devices within the police vehicle does not interfere with WVR or Flex Cam recordings.

6. The user will timely download WVR data through an approved means to the established data management platform. With the Flex Cam System, such may include the use of the appropriate docking station to facilitate download of materials.

7. Users shall not erase, alter, reuse, modify or tamper with any WVR or Flex Cam recording or storage device. Only authorized supervisors may erase recordings and/or reissue devices and may only do so pursuant to the provisions of this policy.

8. Users shall not release, or cause to be released, to any entity, public or private, any WVR or Flex Cam recording. All recordings requiring dissemination will be released by the Information Management Division in accordance with departmental policy. Video to

be used for training purposes will be obtained through a written request to the Chief or his/her designee.

9. At the beginning of each shift, the officer should include the MVR and/or Flex Cam system in the inspection of personally assigned equipment.

10. The user will operate WVR and Flex Cam equipment in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines, departmental policy and training.

11. The user will immediately report any malfunctions, damage or theft of WVR or Flex Cam equipment to the appropriate supervisor.

C. Recording Traffic Stops / Citizen Contacts

1. When practical, the user should initiate a WVR and/or Flex Cam recording of an event immediately upon observing cause to initiate a traffic stop or other citizen contact. The user will ensure that radio traffic related to the traffic stop or calls are recorded using both the video and audio capabilities of the WVR and/or Flex Cam systems.

2. Upon completion of the traffic stop or citizen contact the officer shall end the WVR and Flex Cam recordings and shall assign WVR recordings the appropriate Event ID to the event.

3. Users shall notify a supervisor when the WVR and/or Flex Cam has captured any incident in which he/she believes a pending citizen complaint is likely or any other significant event that would require supervisory notification.

4. All prisoner transports shall be recorded with both audio and video.

D. Supervisor's Responsibility

1. Supervisors shall conduct periodic reviews to:

(a) Ensure the WVR and Flex Cam equipment is being used in accordance to policy and procedures.

(b) To report and correct any officer discrepancies in the use of WVR and Flex Cam equipment.

(c) To make recommendations for revisions to the policy and/or procedures, officer training or equipment needed for WVR and Flex Cam usage.

(d) To inspect for equipment damage, loss or misuse, and to report and investigate the cause.

(e) To assess officer performance to ensure compliance with the Written Directive System.

(f) Such periodic review shall occur as often as needed to ensure compliance with the Audio & Video Recording Equipment policy, but always more than required by CALEA standards.

(g) If a complaint is associated with a recorded event, or an officer believes an incident may generate a complaint, the supervisor will flag the audio/video recording for indefinite retention. This process should result in the video in a 180 Day Pending Review category.

E. Media Duplication

1. All recorded media, recorded images and audio/video recordings are the property of the department. Dissemination that is outside records management policy is strictly prohibited without specific written authorization from the Chief of Police or Assistant Chief of Police. Violation of this policy may result in severe disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.
2. To prevent damage to, or the alteration of, the original recorded media; it shall not be copied, viewed or otherwise inserted into any non-approved device.
3. At the conclusion of court proceedings or as otherwise authorized by the prosecutor's office for which the media was required, all copies shall be submitted back to the Records Division for filing.

F. Classification, Retention, and Documentation

1. The fact that an incident was recorded will be documented in the narrative of every report in which a recording is made.
2. Audio / visual recordings associated with a case number will be classified appropriately as to the type of crime or incident.
3. Data from WVR and/or Flex Cam will be timely download through an approved means to the established data management platform. With the Flex Cam System, such may include the use of the appropriate docking station to facilitate download of materials. Such storage process may also include the use of approved, vendor-provided storage solutions as with TASER's Evidence.com.
4. Recordings will be retained under the following schedule:
 - (a) Traffic Stop / Field Contact: 120 days
 - (b) Traffic Accident: 180 days
 - (c) Arrest: Five (5) years
 - (d) Vehicle / Foot Pursuit (Non-apprehension): 120 days
 - (e) Emergency Response: 120 days
 - (f) Incident: 180 days
 - (g) Officer Involved / Related Accident / Officer Injury: Permanent
 - (h) Fatality or Death Involved: Permanent

(i) Driving Under the Influence: 180 days

(j) Pending Review: 180 days

5. Recordings that meet the requirements for permanent retention will be copied to a CD-ROM or a hard drive and placed into evidence for long term storage by a new position of Records Technician assigned to the Evidence Unit.

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