

BACKGROUND

What are officer body-worn cameras?

Officer body-worn cameras are relatively small devices that record interactions between community members (e.g., the public, suspects and victims) and officers. The video recordings can be used by the police to document statements, observations, behaviors and other evidence; and can simultaneously be used to prevent and deter unprofessional, illegal, and inappropriate behaviors by both the police and the public. Accordingly, this technology can be used to resolve disputes and build trust with the community by preserving a permanent record of critical events.

How does an officer body-worn camera work?

The technology consists of the camera, which is typically worn on the officer's uniform, placed optionally on the shoulder lapel, sunglasses, hat or upper placket, with a forward-facing viewable area. The camera includes user controls such as push to record, touch screen controls, video and audio feed and playback in field. After the officer completes his or her shift the video evidence is uploaded through a docking station on a local storage device (e.g., server) or through an online web-based digital media storage platform where the evidence can be encrypted and managed. Some models also allow for video upload while in the field.

How are body-worn cameras different from dashboard cameras?

As the name suggests dashboard cameras are installed on the dashboard of police vehicles. They video record activity that occurs in front of the car. Some dashboard cameras allow for audio recording near the police vehicle. The major difference between a dashboard camera and a body worn camera is that a dashboard camera is restricted to capturing video and audio evidence close to and in front of the police vehicle. Body worn camera's address this limitation by retaining the strengths of the dashboard camera and at the same time allowing for the technology to accompany the officer where ever he or she goes.

How many law enforcement agencies have adopted officer worn body cameras?

We do not have very good estimates of the number of law enforcement agencies that have initiated body-worn camera programs. Several law enforcement agencies in the United Kingdom have been experimenting with body-worn cameras as far back as 2005. In August 2013, the Police Executive Research Forum surveyed 500 law enforcement agencies regarding their use of body-worn cameras. Of the 254 agencies that responded, just 25% (n=63) indicated that they had deployed body-worn cameras. Interest in the technology has grown tremendously since then however. One body-worn camera vendor advertises that their product has been purchased by 4,000 law enforcement agencies worldwide (as of February 2015).

*link to the PERF report

How can law enforcement agencies benefit from officer body-worn cameras?

There are a number of potential benefits from officer body-worn cameras. Adoption of cameras can represent an effort by a police department to demonstrate transparency and accountability. The current body of research on body-worn cameras is limited, but available studies have

suggested several possible benefits. Body-worn cameras likely have evidentiary value that can facilitate review of citizen complaints, and they may assist with prosecution of criminal cases. There is some research in Great Britain to support this potential benefit, but research in the United States has not sufficiently investigated the evidentiary value of BWCs. In several studies, citizen complaints against officers have decreased following adoption of body-worn cameras. In two studies, use of force by police officers decreased following adoption of body-worn cameras.

What are the primary concerns with officer body-worn cameras?

There are several concerns that a law enforcement agency must address before adopting body-worn cameras. One involves citizen privacy. Officer body-worn cameras do have the potential to violate citizens' expectations of privacy. The technology may also present concerns for vulnerably populations, such as children and victims of crime. Law enforcement agencies should full investigate relevant privacy laws, and should engage relevant stakeholder groups (e.g., victim advocacy groups) before they adopt body-worn cameras.

There are also officer privacy concerns. Police unions have opposed body-worn cameras in a number of jurisdictions, arguing that adoption of the technology must be negotiated as part of the collective bargaining agreement. Officers have also expressed concerns about body-worn cameras because the technology gives supervisors the opportunity to go on "fishing expeditions" against officers in their command. Police chiefs need to gain buy-in from line officers and their unions at the beginning of the process.

The decision by a police department to start a body-worn camera program represents an enormous investment of money, manpower and resources. There are up-front costs in terms of buying the hardware, training officers and developing policy. There are also significant costs associated with operating a body-worn camera program, especially management of the vast amount of video data. In January 2105, the acting Chief of the Phoenix Police Department announced that it would cost their department \$3.5 million to 1) outfit all of their officers with body cameras, and 2) successfully manage the body-worn camera program.

*Link to Phoenix story.

What is the White House *Body Worn Camera Partnership Program*?

The White House Body Worn Camera Partnership Program seeks to establish, build and sustain trust between communities and their local and state law enforcement agencies through the deployment of body worn cameras. On December 1, 2014, President Obama announced a three-year, \$263 million plan to strengthen community policing through enhanced training, additional resources, and increased partnerships between the US Department of Justice and local law enforcement. The plan also includes a proposed \$75 million investment in a new Body-Worn Camera Partnership program that would provide a 50% match to state and local agencies for the purchase of up to 50,000 cameras and requisite video storage.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/12/01/building-trust-between-communities-and-local-police>

Why was this toolkit developed?

The acquisition, implementation, and use of body worn camera video in state and local law enforcement agencies can be costly, complex process. This toolkit was developed by BJA and your peers to provide agencies with the resources necessary to implement officer body-worn cameras in an efficient, equitable, and effective way. This toolkit seeks to help you become familiar with: many of the questions related to body-worn cameras; the hardware and software issues associated with the implementation of body-worn cameras; the steps for successful acquisition of body worn cameras; training officers and others to use body-worn cameras; the evidence produced through them; the liabilities and risks associated with body-worn cameras; the strengths of body-worn cameras as well as the concerns related to them; privacy and legal issues for citizens, victims and the accused; and the personnel and organizational challenges to implementing body-worn cameras in your agency.

Can I reuse the materials in the toolkit?

Those who contributed to the information and resources made available through this toolkit have developed them for your review and use. If you use content from the toolkit we only ask that you attribute the material to the site or the original author of the material.

Who contributed to this toolkit?

Members of the _____ expert advisory panel provided guidance on the development of the Body Worn Camera Toolkit. We would like to especially thank Dr. Charles M. Katz and Dr. Michael D. White from Arizona State University for their efforts in developing the toolkit. We would also like to acknowledge that this tool kit was modeled after BJA's Law Enforcement Naloxone Tool Kit, which can be found at

<https://www.bjatraining.org/tools/naloxone/Naloxone%2BBackground>.

PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF BODY-WORN CAMERAS

Do body-worn cameras reduce complaints against the police?

While we do not have a definitive answer at this time, research has consistently shown that officer body-worn cameras have a substantial and significant impact on complaints against the police. For example, in Rialto, California citizen complaints against officer dropped by 88% after body-worn cameras were deployed in the field. In Mesa, Arizona body-worn cameras were associated with a 60% decrease in complaints against the police. In Phoenix, Arizona complaints against officers who wore the cameras declined by 23%, compared to a 10.6% increase among comparison officers and 45.1% increase among patrol officers in other precincts. The reasons why body-worn cameras may cause reductions in citizen complaints is not known. The cameras may causes improved behavior (“civilizing effect”), may influence citizen reporting rates (less likely to file complaints, especially frivolous complaints), or both. More research is needed but the consistency of the complaint reduction findings is notable.

Do body-worn cameras reduce use of force by police?

There is even less information available about the impact of body-worn cameras on officer use of force. In Rialto, there were 61 use of force incidents before deployment of body-worn cameras, and just 25 incidents after deployment (60% drop). Additionally, “control” work shifts (officers who were not wearing cameras) produced double the number of use of force incidents compared to “treatment” shifts (camera-wearing officers) during the same period. Much more research needs to be conducted to determine whether body-worn cameras reduce use of force by the police. **CHUCK – ANYTHING TO SAY HERE ABOUT PHX SPI ON USE OF FORCE?**

*link to the Rialto study, the Ariel et al. paper in Journal of Quantitative Criminology.

Do body-worn cameras increase officer performance?

It depends on which types of officer performance you are talking about.

With regard to paper work, the research is mixed. In Plymouth, England, body-worn cameras led to quicker resolution of cases which produced a 22.4 percent reduction in officer time devoted to paperwork and file preparation; and to an increase of 9.2 percent in officer time spent on patrol, or an extra 50 minutes per nine-hour shift. But in Victoria, Canada and in Phoenix, Arizona it was reported that officers spent significantly more time on paper work following the deployment of body-worn cameras.

With respect to evidentiary quality, research conducted in Plymouth (United Kingdom), Victoria (Canada), and Phoenix suggest that the use of body cameras increases the quality of evidence. Related, in Phoenix researchers reported that domestic violence incidents where an officer was wearing a body-worn camera were more likely to result in charging and conviction. Specifically, they found that when compared to non-camera cases, camera cases were more likely to be initiated by the prosecutor’s office (40.9% vs. 34.3%), have charges filed (37.7% vs. 26%), have cases furthered (12.7% vs. 6.2%), result in a guilty plea (4.4% vs. 1.2%), and result in a guilty verdict at trial (4.4% vs. 0.9%).

If officer’s performance is measured by number of arrests the evidence is ____ In Rialto, there was an increase in the number of contacts between the police and the public after body-worn cameras were deployed in the field. In Phoenix, Arizona researchers found that officers made about arrests increased by 17% following the implementation of body-worn cameras (compared to about a 9% increase in arrests among the officers in the comparison group who did not wear cameras).

Do body-worn cameras assist with the investigation of citizen complaints against police officers?

There is little empirical evidence on the impact of body-worn cameras on citizen complaint investigations. In Phoenix, researchers reported that camera-wearing officers who received a complaint were significantly less likely to have the complaint sustained, compared non-camera wearing officers in the comparison group and other patrol officers throughout the PPD. Evidence from the United Kingdom also suggests that body-worn cameras may result in quicker

investigation of citizen complaints against police. The video evidence may also be used to provide citizens with additional information that helps them understand the police officer's behavior during a particular encounter (e.g., educational value).

Link to ODS Consulting (2011) report; link to Goodall (2007) report; Harris (2010) paper.

Do body-worn cameras assist with the prosecution of criminal cases?

There is little evidence on the effect of body-worn cameras on criminal prosecutions. In Phoenix, researchers found that domestic violence cases that involved a camera-wearing officer were more likely to be initiated by the prosecutor's office (40.9% vs. 34.3%), have charges filed (37.7% vs. 26%), have cases furthered (12.7% vs. 6.2%), result in a guilty plea (4.4% vs. 1.2%), and result in a guilty verdict at trial (4.4% vs. 0.9%).

The Plymouth (England) Head Camera Project reported that the technology increased officers' ability to document that a violent crime had occurred, and the incidents recorded by body-worn cameras were more likely to be resolved through guilty pleas rather than criminal trials. In Renfrewshire, Scotland, body-worn camera cases were 70-80 percent more likely to result in a guilty plea, compared to other court cases.

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE ISSUES

What types of body-worn cameras are available to law enforcement?

What types of equipment are necessary to record and download video?

What do we do with all of the data that is generated by officer body-worn cameras?

How long do we have to store the video generated by officer body-worn cameras?

Rules governing how long video must be stored may vary across cities and states. Video that depicts an arrest or critical incident may have to be stored for years. Departments have varied on how long they keep video that depicts an encounter where no formal action is taken. Some departments will store such video for at least as long as the period in which a citizen complaint can be filed. For example, if citizens can file a complaint for up to six months after an encounter with a police officer, it may be necessary to keep all video for six months so the video can be accessed to assist with the complaint investigation. State law may dictate the length of time for storage of more formal police-citizen encounters. **DRAFT – NEED MORE**

ACQUIRING BODY-WORN CAMERAS

How much does it cost to implement a body-worn camera program?

What are the key policy areas we should consider before implementing a body-worn camera program?

There is a wide range of important issues that should be governed by administrative policy. Many of the key policy areas are outlined by the Body Worn Video Steering Group (BWVSG) in their policy template, such as: selection of technology vendor; officer training; aspects of camera deployment (voluntary or required; when to turn the camera on and off); dealing with vulnerable and sensitive populations; rules governing supervisory review; data storage and management; and video redaction. Other excellent resources for policy considerations include: a report by the National Institute of Justice Sensor, Surveillance, and Biometric Technologies (SSBT) Center of Excellence (2012); and a joint report by the US COPS Office and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF; 2014).

One key policy area involves activation – when are officers required to turn the camera on. Departments have varied considerably on this issue, from very conservative policies that require recording every police-citizen contact to highly discretionary policies. One study indicates that activation policy has a significant impact on how often cameras are used. The Mesa Police Department employed two different administrative policies during their evaluation period. For the first six months, the policy was very restrictive and gave officers little choice regarding camera activation. During the second six months, the policy was more discretionary. During the first six months (with the restrictive policy), the 50 camera-wearing officers averaged 2,327 video files per month. During the second six-month period (with the less restrictive policy), the same 50 officers averaged 1,353 video files per month – a 42 percent decline in camera activations.

Link to the BWVSG website, NIJ SSBT report; COPS/PERF report; Mesa PD report.

What do we need to do to prepare the prosecutor and other criminal justice agencies for the implementation of a body-worn camera program?

Are there sample or model policies that we can examine before developing the administrative policy governing our body-worn camera program?

Agencies have varied considerably in the content and structure of their department policies. Many agencies have made their policies publicly available, or they will furnish their policy upon request. There are currently several model policies available for review. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has devised a model policy. In the United Kingdom, policy resources are available through a UK Home Office report (Goodall, 2007) and the Body Worn Video Steering Group (BWVSG).

*Links to the BWVSG website, the Goodall (2007) report, and the IACP Model Policy.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

Who should deliver training to law enforcement officers about the deployment of a body-worn cameras?

How often do law enforcement officers need to be retrained on proper use of body-worn cameras?

Do investigators and detectives need special or different training on body-worn cameras?

How do we train prosecutors about the changes related to our body-worn camera program?

LIABILITY AND RISK

Do body-worn cameras reduce the liability of the city and police department related to police misconduct?

Is there additional risk and liability for the police or the public if we implement a body-worn camera program?

Do we have to tell a citizen that our officer is recording the encounter with a body-worn camera?

How do we handle public and media requests for video from officer body-worn cameras?

PRIVACY AND LEGAL ISSUES FOR CITIZENS, VICTIMS AND THE ACCUSED

What should our officers do if a citizen requests that the body-worn cameras be turned off?

Is it legal for the police to record incidents with citizens using body-worn cameras?

What concerns do victims have regarding body-worn cameras?

Do body-worn cameras create concerns for rights of the accused?

OFFICER CONCERNS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

What do sergeants and other supervisors need to know about officer body-worn cameras?

Should we tell citizens and advocacy groups that we are planning to implement an officer body-worn camera program?

How can police unions participate in the implementation of officer body-worn cameras programs?

What other units in the police department should be involved in the body-worn camera implementation process?

What do patrol officers need to know about body-worn cameras?

Do body-worn cameras pose a health and safety risk to law enforcement officers?

There is currently no evidence from the U.S. documenting any sort of health and safety risks associated with body-worn cameras. The U.K. Home Office guide provides a comprehensive list of potential hazards to officers who wear head-mounted cameras, rates the risk level for each hazard, and discusses strategies to mitigate risk. Many of the hazards are deemed to be low-risk, such as being targeted for assault because of the camera, neck injury from the weight of the camera, and electrical shock. However, several hazards are rated as medium-risk, such as: strangulation with the lead (or wire) by an offender; head injury through impact of the camera by an assailant; and soreness, discomfort and headache from the headband. Most of the cited health concerns are mitigated by wearing the camera on other parts of the uniform (e.g., torso, not the head). The lack of evidence regarding the health and safety concerns does not mean there are not risks. Departments should explore potential risks as they adopt the technology.

COLLABORATION

How can we use body-worn cameras to increase trust between the police and the public?

How are other agencies informing the public that the department is implementing a body-worn camera program?

Are there specific ways we can use body-worn cameras to increase legitimacy between the police and minority communities.

There are 44 questions in this toolkit.