

HOPKINSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT HOPKINSVILLE, KENTUCKY GENERAL ORDER	ISSUE DATE: 12/08/2014	EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/01/2015	NUMBER: 2-45b
SUBJECT: BODY CAMERA SYSTEMS		AMENDED: REVIEWED:	
INDEX AS:		RESCINDS:	
ACCREDITATION STANDARDS:			

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Directive is to establish and describe policies and procedures for the use of Body Camera Systems, the control of evidence obtained on digital recordings, and the storage of digital recordings used with this recording equipment.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the Hopkinsville Police Department to employ Body Camera recording equipment for the purpose of gathering recorded evidence for courtroom presentation in the prosecution of both traffic and criminal cases. The use of this equipment shall also assist the Department in identifying training needs, in the defense of complaints against personnel, and in an ongoing assessment of officer-citizen contacts and officer safety habits.

III. Discussion

The Hopkinsville Police Department is committed to the use of Body Camera recording systems to protect the rights of citizens and police officers while balancing privacy interest. It is the policy of the Hopkinsville Police Department to use recording devices to enhance the public's perception of our professionalism and transparency. The Department recognizes that video images cannot always show the full story nor do the video images capture the entire scene. The use of equipment to capture video images does not reduce the requirement to provide thorough written documentation of an incident.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Body Camera System (BCS): A camera affixed or worn upon an officer's uniform with video and audio recording capability.

V. BODY CAMERA SYSTEM (BCS) USER GUIDELINES

- A. Members will activate the BCS during law enforcement encounters when potentially dealing with a subject involved in criminal activity. This would include, but is not limited to traffic stops, proactive policing efforts, and calls for service. Additionally, tactical activities such as building searches, searches for suspects, and foot pursuits. Members shall activate the BCS when a citizen contact becomes adversarial and it is in the best interest of the agency to have the incident recorded.
- B. There may be instances in which a member is required to take immediate action to an event that occurs directly in front of them which may not allow time to activate the BCS. In those circumstances, the member shall activate the BCS as soon as practical, and give a brief explanation of the events that happen prior to activation.
- C. In order to protect the relationship between the community and the agency, members have the discretion whether to record informal, non-law enforcement related interactions with the public.
- D. BCS should remain activated once turned on unless the incident or event is of such duration that the BCS may be deactivated to conserve recording times and the officer does not reasonably believe the deactivation will result in the loss of critical information. A member will record on camera the reason for deactivating the BCS prior to deactivating the camera.
- E. Members must turn off the BCS if asked to do so by the person that has authority over the constitutionally protected area. Members should be aware of surroundings when operating a BCS, such as in a hospital or medical facility where privacy of the patient should be considered when operating the BCS (i.e. for Diplomats).
- F. A member will not intentionally record conversations with other department members without their knowledge during routine, non-enforcement related activities. The BCS will not be used to record personal activity. Members will not record encounters with undercover officers or informants.
- G. Prior to beginning each shift officers shall inspect the BCS equipment to determine if it is working and aligned properly. Officers shall report any operational problems to their immediate supervisor and complete a trouble ticket via the City of Hopkinsville IT Portal. Members will only use BCS equipment issued by the department. No other BCS devices shall be used to record police encounters unless authorized by the Chief of Police.
- H. Members will receive training on the policy and use of the BCS equipment.
- I. Members will document in their report that the incident was recorded by the BCS. If the member fails to activate the BCS as directed by policy, the member will document the circumstances in a supplement report.

VI. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Supervisors may regularly ensure cameras are operational and functioning properly. They will ensure members are operating BCS units in accordance with this directive through inspection and reviews of recorded activity.
- B. Supervisors may review recordings each month focusing on adherence to Departmental Directives, officer safety, and training issues that may arise. Issues will be reported to the Chain of Command.

VII. DIGITAL TRANSFER AND RETENTION PROCEDURES

- A. Each officer will be responsible for downloading video in a timely fashion and should try to download video each shift worked. Officers are required to download video prior to beginning a series of days off from work. Video evidence will not be attached to a case until the officer downloads the file to disk, fills out a property sheet, and submits it into evidence.
- B. Patrol supervisors, through periodic inspection, shall ensure that officers are downloading video from their assigned camera.
- C. The digital and audio information downloaded will be stored on a Server that is managed by the Property Custodian. All personnel will have the ability to review and copy files downloaded. Supervisors will have the ability to copy and review all files downloaded.
- D. Digital video files shall only be released pursuant to a subpoena, or pursuant to discovery and inspection as provided in RCr 7.24 of the Kentucky Rules of Criminal Procedure.
- E. If an officer is involved in an incident in which the video will be useful other than as evidence in a criminal proceeding, (i.e. training or citizen complaint) can be reviewed by the officer and or his supervisor.
- F. The retention of video and audio files of non-evidentiary value may be purged after **30 days**. Video files of evidentiary value shall be downloaded, burned to disk, and turned into evidence. All video and audio files will be maintained in accordance with KRS 171.410- 740 and Local Government General Records Retention Schedule.