

## **PURPOSE**

To identify when body worn camera recording devices should be used and procedures to be followed when using the recording equipment.

## **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Johnston Police Department to use body worn camera recording devices to collect evidence and document interactions between officers and the public. Only approved equipment will be used by department members and usage shall comply with the manufacturer's instructions. Only those members trained in the use of the recording devices are authorized to use the equipment. All videos are the property of the Johnston Police Department. Any distribution of a video or portion of a video shall only be done with the authorization of the Chief of Police or designee. The playing or copying of any unauthorized video is prohibited. The Chief of Police or designee will supervise the use, storage, duplication and purging of the material recorded by members of this department.

## **DEFINITIONS**

- A. Body Worn Camera System: An Axon Body Worn Camera, USB connection cables, Axon software.
- B. System Administrator: A supervisor appointed to oversee the operation, installation, and maintenance of the body camera system and storage.
- C. Officer: Any member of the department utilizing an Axon Body Worn Camera.

## **PROCEDURES**

The use of body worn cameras will allow officers to collect evidence for use in the prosecution of those charged with a violation. Other appropriate uses of the recorded information include but are not limited to:

- A. review of an incident prior to a court appearance;
- B. recorded information may be used or subpoenaed into court for civil and/or criminal cases;
- C. provide documentation of incidents which do not result in charges;
- D. assist in the report writing process;
- E. recorded material may be used in or provide the basis for training.

## TRAINING

Officers who are assigned a camera shall be trained and proficient in their use of the body worn camera equipment. If further training is needed to achieve proficiency in the body worn camera recording system, the officer shall contact a supervisor to receive training to achieve proficiency. This training shall be documented by a task list and signed off as soon as training is complete. The Field Training Coordinator will create a task list for this purpose.

All officers who are assigned a camera will be trained on the operation of the Body Worn Camera System, and are expected to become knowledgeable about the operation and functions of the system as outlined in the user manual. A printed copy of the instructions is available. Problems encountered while using the Body Worn Camera System shall be brought to a supervisor's attention as soon as possible and an equipment repair order shall be turned in.

## PATROL PREPARATION AND EQUIPMENT TEST

At the start of each watch, all officers shall ensure the proper functioning of their body worn camera system. The camera should be placed in such a way that it captures audio and visual to the front of the officer. The camera should be mounted vertically, be unobstructed, and be affixed to the uniform in a way approved by the Chief of Police.

## MALFUNCTIONS

If an officer notices there is a problem with the equipment, he/she shall notify a watch commander. If the watch commander is unable to remedy the error, he/she will forward notification of the problem or malfunction to the System Administrator via an equipment repair order.

- **MAINTENANCE**

Only persons trained in the servicing of the equipment will service the equipment. Any defective unit will not be used, and when practical, will be removed from service. As long as the device is able to record, it should be kept in service.

- **VIDEO RECORDING EQUIPMENT USE**

Body worn camera recording units are activated when the officer depresses the record button and is recording when the light on top is green or flashing green. A red or flashing red light indicates a full memory or low battery life. All officers on a call will activate their cameras.

- A. **TRAFFIC STOPS**

All traffic stops shall be recorded in their entirety. Officers should, to the extent possible, use the recording equipment to document the administration of field sobriety tests, remembering that safety is the first priority. This is in addition to the in-car video system.

#### B. CALLS FOR SERVICE/FIELD ACTIVITY

1. Officers shall activate their body camera on all calls for service and on self-initiated field activity. It is recommended that officers give consideration to activating the system when responding to calls for service where video/audio capture of persons/vehicles leaving the scene of incidents has investigative value. Once a recording unit has been activated it shall only be stopped when the incident in question is concluded.
2. Once the situation stabilizes, if necessary to discuss issues or concerns with another officer or supervisor in private, the body camera may be temporarily shut off. The intention to stop the recording will be noted by the officer verbally on the body worn camera.

#### C. CITIZEN CONTACT

Officers shall activate their body worn camera on all citizen contacts, regardless of type of contact. This section may not apply to:

1. Contacts with other law enforcement persons;
2. Contacts with friends/family of a personal nature;
3. Cordial contacts which are very brief;
4. Community relations functions/presentations;
5. Adopt-A-School site visits

#### D. PROHIBITED USES:

1. Body worn camera shall not be used in the employee locker rooms, restrooms or any other place where there would be a reasonable expectation of privacy.
2. Body worn cameras will not be intentionally activated to record conversations of fellow employees without their knowledge during routine, non-enforcement related activities.

#### • DISCLOSURE TO THE PUBLIC

Officers are not required to inform person(s) that the recording equipment is in use, but shall disclose its use upon inquiry.

- **SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. OFFICER COMPLAINTS

In instances where there is a citizen complaint against a member of the department, the supervisor receiving the complaint shall ascertain if the action being complained about was recorded.

- B. PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Supervisors are permitted to review footage to ensure compliance with recording policies and protocols, specifically for the following situations:

1. When officers are still in a probationary period or are with a field training officer;
2. When officers have a pattern of allegations of verbal or physical abuse;
3. Use of Force and vehicle pursuit reviews;
4. Citizens complaints

- C. Ensure that body cameras are downloaded at the end of shift.

- **VIDEO TRANSFER**

Video's created by the Axon body worn cameras must be downloaded at the end of each watch where the camera was used. The cameras will be downloaded into the video system by placing the camera into the docking station.