

GENERAL ORDER
Section 3-017.1
Body Worn Cameras (BWC)

PURPOSE: This policy is intended to provide officers with instructions on when and how to use the body-worn cameras (BWCs) so that officers may reliably record their contacts with the public.

POLICY: The Tipton Police Department may require the use of the BWC for the purpose of collecting evidence for use in the prosecution of those who violate the law, and to provide protection for its officers and a higher level of service to the public. This policy does not govern the use of surreptitious recording devices used in undercover operations.

PROCEDURE:

A. Administration

The Tipton Police Department has adopted the use of the BWC to accomplish several objectives. The primary objectives are as follows:

1. BWC's allow for accurate documentation of police-public contacts, arrests, and critical incidents. They also serve to enhance the accuracy of officer reports and testimony in court.
2. Audio and video recordings also enhance this agency's ability to review probable cause for arrest, officer and suspect interaction, and evidence for investigative and prosecutorial purposes and to provide additional information for officer evaluation and training.
3. The BWC may also be useful in documenting crime and accident scenes or other events that include the confiscation and documentation of evidence or contraband.

B. When and How to Use the BWC

1. Officers shall activate the BWC to record all contacts with citizens in the performance of official duties. Officer discretion may be used during circumstances such as vin checks, vehicle unlocks, and casual encounters.

2. Whenever possible, officers should inform individuals that they are being recorded. In locations where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a residence, they may decline to be recorded unless the recording is being made in pursuant to an arrest or search of the residence of the individuals. The BWC shall remain activated until the event is completed in order to ensure the integrity of the recording unless the contact moves into an area restricted by this policy.

3. If an officer fails to activate the BWC, fails to record the entire contact, or interrupts the recording, the officer shall document why a recording was not made, was interrupted, or was terminated. Acceptable reasons for termination and failure to record are as follows.

a. Malfunction in the device

b. There is personal information being shared that is not case sensitive

such

as victim family information/discussion, protected personal information,

or

personal medical information. The BWC should not be used in a medical facility unless there is an obvious need to document evidence.

c. There is a long break in in the incident such as an interruption related

to

routine travel, waiting on a family member for retrieval, or a tow truck.

d. During discussions between a probationary officer and FTO for

purposes

of counseling during the incident.

4. Citizens shall not be allowed to review the recordings at the scene. The Chief of Police, or his designee will monitor recordings with citizens at the Chief's discretion.

C. Procedures for BWC use

1. BWC equipment is issued primarily to uniformed personnel as authorized

by the Tipton Police Department. Officers who are assigned BWC equipment

must use the equipment unless otherwise authorized by supervisory personnel.

Detectives, and plain clothes officer assignments are not bound by this policy

and may use discretion on use of the BWC.

2. Police personnel shall use only BWCs issued by the Tipton Police Department. The BWC equipment and all data, images, video, and metadata captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of this agency.
3. Police personnel who are assigned BWCs must complete an agency Approved and/or provided training program to ensure proper use and operation.
4. BWC equipment is the responsibility of the individual officers and will be used with reasonable care to ensure proper functioning. Equipment malfunctions shall be brought to the attention of the officer's supervisor as soon as possible so that a replacement unit may be procured.
5. Officers shall inspect and test the BWC prior to each shift in order to verify proper functioning and shall notify their supervisor of any problems.
6. Officers shall not edit, alter, erase, duplicate, copy, share, or otherwise distribute in any manner BWC recordings without prior written authorization and approval of the chief of police or their designee.
7. Requests for deletions of recordings (in the event of a personal or accidental recording) must be approved by the shift supervisor.
8. Officers shall note in incident, arrest, and related reports when recordings were made during the incident in question. However, BWC recordings are not replacement for written reports.

9. The BWC is to be worn at the breast level on or near the pocket flap to maximize the visual angle. Wearing of the BWC on the duty belt is not acceptable.

D. Restrictions on Using the BWC

BWCs shall be used only in conjunction with official law enforcement duties.

The BWC shall not generally be used to record:

1. Communication with other police personnel without the permission of the Chief of Police.
2. When on break or otherwise engaged in personal activities; or
3. In any location where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a restroom or locker room.

E. Storage

1. All files shall be securely downloaded periodically and no later than the end of each work week. Each file shall contain information related to the date and assigned officer.
2. All images and sounds recorded by the BWC are the exclusive property of The Tipton Police Department. Accessing, copying, or releasing files for non law enforcement purposes is strictly prohibited.
3. Files should be securely stored in accordance with state records retention laws and no longer than useful for purposes of training or for use in investigation or prosecution.

F. Supervisory Responsibilities

1. Supervisory personnel shall ensure that officers equipped with the BWC devices utilize them in accordance with policy and procedures defined herein.

2. At least on a monthly basis, supervisors will randomly review BWC recordings to ensure that the equipment is operating properly and that officers are using the devices appropriately and in accordance with the policy and to identify any areas in which additional training or guidance is required.