

## **Body Worn Cameras**

### **10.11.01 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the policies and procedures governing the San Francisco Police Department's ("Department's") Body Worn Camera ("BWC") program. BWC is an effective tool the Department uses to demonstrate its commitment to transparency, to ensure the accountability of its members, increase the public's trust in officers, and protect its members from unjustified complaints of misconduct. The Department is also committed to using BWC because the footage is important in investigations, litigation, and for training purposes.

### **10.11.02 POLICY**

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Department members assigned a body-worn camera (BWC) are required to wear and utilize the BWC consistent with this policy. Members will prior to the assignment of and deployment with a BWC, be trained on the use of the BWC equipment and this policy.

### **10.11.03 DEFINITIONS**

- A.** Buffering Mode - When in the On Position, but not activated. In Buffering Mode, the BWC captures video but not audio. The video is not stored in permanent memory until BWC activation.
- B.** Off Position - When the on/off button of the camera has been pressed to stop Buffering Mode. When off, the BWC cannot record audio or video.
- C.** Activate - Triggering the BWC by touch or any other method, which initiates the audio and video recording functions.
- D.** De-Activate - Discontinuing audio and video recording and returning the camera to a buffering mode in the on position.
- E.** Incident - Any activity that is in furtherance of a law enforcement goal or investigation. These include, but are not limited to, traffic stops, pedestrian stops,

calls for service, follow-up investigations, interviews, searches, crowd control incidents, protests, and arrests.

- F.** Stabilize - When a member has completed their part of the incident and there is little possibility that the member will have further involvement of evidentiary value.
- G.** Member – A sworn employee of the San Francisco Police Department.

#### **10.11.04 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A.** All uniformed members issued a BWC are required to wear and use their BWCs while in uniform, except as described below. Sworn members holding the ranks of officer, sergeant, lieutenant and Captain shall be issued BWCs. Superior ranks shall not be issued a BWC and shall return any issued BWC to the Department upon promotion.
- B.** Members shall ensure their assigned BWC is fully charged and properly functioning at the beginning of each shift.
- C.** The BWC shall be secured to the member's uniform, above the beltline, on the front of the member's chest, and to the outermost garment (such as an external jacket, an external vest carrier, or exterior armor) to promote the camera's ability to clearly record video and audio.
  - 1. The BWC may be temporarily moved from the mounted position to facilitate recording in furtherance of a police objective.
  - 2. Exemptions to the positioning of the BWC may only be authorized by a Commander or above.
- D.** Members assigned to "front desk" or station keeper duties are required to wear a BWC and are required to activate in accordance with SEC 10.11.05(A).
- E.** Members are responsible for the reasonable care and maintenance of the BWC they are issued.
  - 1. When a member discovers their BWC is broken, damaged, lost, or otherwise unavailable for use, the member shall notify their supervisor.
    - a. As soon as practical, the supervisor shall issue a replacement BWC, which are available at each station.
    - b. The member shall submit a memorandum documenting the need for a replacement.
  - 2. Exceptions to wearing a BWC:
    - a. When in Class "A" or "AA" uniform attending a formal event, unless a supervisor otherwise directs.
    - b. When engaged in EOD duties.

- c. When engaged in training conducted within the Training Division.  
When assigned to units whose primary duties are administrative and where they are required to wear a uniform.
3. Non-Uniformed officers' use of BWC shall be governed by Department General Order 5.08.

### **10.11.05 ACTIVATION OF BODY WORN CAMERAS**

- A.** Members must ensure the BWC is in the On Position and in Buffering Mode after leaving a police, detention, or medical facility.  
All members (not just the primary unit) dispatched, present, or otherwise participating in any of the below listed incidents must activate their BWC except during emergency encounters that require immediate action to preserve life or safety:
  1. A response to any call for service, or activity with a potential to require law enforcement action.
  2. During any consensual encounter where the member has reason to believe that a member of the public may have knowledge of criminal activity as a suspect, witness or victim.
  3. Making or attempting to make a traffic or pedestrian stop.
  4. Making or attempting to make a detention or an arrest.
  5. During 5150 Evaluations
  6. During all pursuits
  7. During all uses of force
  8. When operating a vehicle in a Code 3 (emergency lights and siren activated) capacity as defined in DGO 5.05 Emergency Response and Pursuit Driving.
  9. Transporting a detainee/arrestee
  10. Searches of persons, structures, or vehicles, including warrant services.
  11. At the direction of the Event Commander during a public demonstration.
  12. Issuing citations when driver is not present.
- B.** There may be instances in which a member is required to take immediate action in response to an event which may not allow time to activate their BWC. In those situations, it may be impractical or unreasonable for members to activate their BWC before taking police action. It is expected that once the immediacy of the situation is over, members will activate their BWC system to record the remainder of the incident. Members shall articulate the reasoning for the delayed activation of their BWC in a report, statement, or other form of Department approved documentation.
- C.** Members do not need consent from members of the public prior to recording when the member is lawfully in the area where the recording takes place nor are they required to activate or deactivate a BWC upon the request of a member of the public. Members are not required to play back BWC recordings for members of the public.

- D.** If the BWC is accidentally activated or inadvertently captures an unintended recording, a member may submit a memorandum through the chain of command with the date, time, and summary of the accidental/unintended recording. The memorandum will be forwarded to the Commanding Officer of the Risk Management Office (RMO) for evaluation and appropriate action.

### **10.11.06 DEACTIVATION AND EXCEPTIONS**

- A.** The BWC may be deactivated in the following circumstances:

1. Upon stabilization of an incident.
2. When on a perimeter post or static post where they are not in contact with members of the public, involved in the initial incident, or actively part of the investigation. The BWC will be reactivated if a mandated recording circumstance occurs.
3. While the member is on break or is otherwise not actively performing law enforcement functions (e.g., while eating meals, when in service, but not on a call, etc.)
4. Routine contact with a member of the public (e.g., a person asking for directions)
5. Members on a guard assignment at a police, medical, psychiatric, jail or detention facility unless a mandatory recording circumstance occurs.
6. When respect for an individual's privacy or dignity outweighs the need to record an incident. Such circumstances may include natural death scenes, child or sexual assault victim interviews, and when the use of BWC would impede or limit the cooperation of a victim or witness.

- B.** The BWC shall not be activated:

1. During department briefings, meetings, roll calls.
2. During compelled statements such as public safety statements, and administrative interviews (e.g. Internal Affairs (IA) or Department of Police Accountability (DPA) related interviews)
3. While in any magistrate's or judge's office, any courtroom, or correctional facility.
4. When directed by a supervisor, members shall document the supervisor's order and reason in an incident report and/or CAD update
5. During strip searches
6. In private areas of police facilities (e.g. locker rooms) and areas of police facilities that would compromise security and confidentiality.
  - i. Holding cells/Booking areas are not considered "private areas" for purposes of this policy.
7. For personal activities
8. During medical or psychological evaluations or treatment by a clinician or similar professional, while in a medical facility unless a mandatory recording

circumstance occurs.

### **10.11.07 UPLOADING AND DOCUMENTATION**

- A.** Members shall begin uploading all media prior to the end of their shift unless a supervisor approves an alternative schedule.
  - 1. Members on an outside assignment (e.g., 10B, squad deployment) are permitted to download all recorded evidence no later than during their next regularly assigned on-duty shift unless involved in a use of force, an arrest, or directed by a supervisor.
- B.** Members will ensure the data is categorized and titled with the following information:
  - 1. The title of the video shall contain either the incident report number, CAD number, or citation number in addition to a brief description for the incident.
  - 2. The category of the video shall indicate the type of incident.
- C.** Entering the information specified above in 10.11.07(B) shall be completed daily. Should conditions exist that prohibit completion during the member's shift, it shall be completed by the end of the member's next regularly scheduled shift.

During incidents that require a large-scale activation of the Department's members, (such as large protests, natural disasters, mutual aide, etc.), the incident commander may approve delayed information entry. Such approval shall be documented in the Incident Commander's After Action Report

- D.** Members authoring incident reports or statements shall document their use of the BWC or ensure that it is documented by another member. Members aware that there is no recording or a delay in recording are required to explain the reason for the delay or non-activation in their report or statement.
- E.** For incidents that do not result in incident reports, members will document the reasons for the delay or non-activation in a memorandum or in CAD.
- F.** Members not assigned to a call for service or incident but who capture video of the incident will attach themselves to the call and note that the incident was recorded in a CAD update.

### **10.11.08 REVIEW OF BWC RECORDINGS**

- A.** Members are authorized to review BWC recordings for legitimate investigatory or administrative purposes, such as preparing an incident report, conducting follow-up investigations, testifying in court or other proceeding, or for any other official law

enforcement use, or as directed by the Chief of Police, except for Covered Incident investigations as described below.

- B.** Covered Incident Investigations – Following any (1) officer-involved shooting; (2) in-custody death; or (3) serious bodily injury use of force investigation (“Covered Incident Investigation”), involved members may not review any BWC recordings of the incident unless authorized by the lead criminal investigator.

Covered Incidents are investigated by outside agencies (whether the District Attorney’s Office or the Attorney General’s Office). These agencies are subject to their own policies and procedures. It is SFPD’s preference, however, that these agencies not permit involved members to view BWC recordings until after the members have been interviewed, after which time the member should be permitted to review their own recording and be given an opportunity to provide a follow-up statement. Audio and video recordings have limitations and may depict events differently than the events recalled by an officer.

- C.** All recordings made using BWCs are the property of SFPD and are subject to Departmental policies and applicable laws regarding viewing, release, retention, and destruction. Recordings will not be released or disseminated to the public without the express written consent of the Chief of Police or their authorized designee or unless otherwise expressly required by federal, state, or local law. Members shall not:
  - 1. Edit, alter, erase, duplicate, copy, record on a device such as a cell phone camera or secondary video camera.
  - 2. Distribute in any manner body worn camera recordings without proper authorization, including posting recordings on social media for personal use.
  - 3. Access, copy, release, or share BWC data on any computer or device not controlled or provided by the SFPD.
  - 4. Convert for their personal use or for the unauthorized use of another person, any information from Department video files or the confidential files of any other agency.
- D.** Nothing herein is intended to limit the DPA role in critical incident investigations.

### **10.11.09 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A.** Supervisors shall ensure that members assigned a BWC utilize them in accordance with policy and procedure.
- B.** Supervisors will ensure member videos related to critical incidents are uploaded and tagged for retention as soon as practical.

- C.** A supervisor not actively involved in a critical incident shall take possession of a member's BWC under the following circumstances:
  - 1. The member is the subject or witness to a Covered Incident.
  - 2. The member is the subject of a criminal investigation.
- D.** When a supervisor seizes a member's BWC, the investigative unit assigned to the above incidents shall be responsible for uploading and titling relevant recordings on the seized BWC.
- E.** Supervisors shall review a member's BWC recordings to evaluate professional conduct or performance
  - 1. Supervisors may not review an officer's BWC footage for purpose of retaliation or unfair targeting.
- F.** Supervisors may review a member's BWC recordings under the following circumstances:
  - 1. When conducting an administrative or criminal investigation or performing supervisory duties (e.g., injury report or use of force evaluation)
  - 2. To ensure that a member's BWC functions properly
  - 3. Training (e.g., FTO, Return to Duty) Supervisors may select portions of relevant BWC recordings to train members in safety, de-escalation, empathy, proper police procedures, and legal doctrines.

### **10.11.10 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

- A.** SFPD's goal is to publicly release BWC recordings to the greatest extent permitted by law.
- B.** Risk Management Office (RMO) is the BWC program administrator. The duties of the RMO include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Granting security access to the computer server
  - 2. Monitoring retention timeframes as required by policy and law
  - 3. Complying with Public Record Act (PRA) requests and all court record requests
  - 4. Conducting periodic and random audits of BWC equipment and the computer server
  - 5. Conducting periodic and random audits of BWC recordings for members' compliance with the policy
  - 6. Maintaining a log of access, duplication, distribution, and deletion.
- C.** Tracking, maintenance, issuance, and replacement of BWC shall be the responsibility of the Technology Division.

- D.** When requested by the DPA, members of the Legal Division shall provide the BWC recordings consistent with applicable laws, Department policies, and MOUs.
- E.** Consistent with state law, the Department shall retain all BWC recordings for a minimum of sixty (60) days, after which recordings may be erased, destroyed or recycled.
1. The Department shall retain BWC recordings for a minimum of two (2) years if:
    - a. The recording is of an incident involving a member's use of force or officer-involved shooting; or
    - b. The recording is of an incident that leads to the detention or arrest of an individual; or
    - c. The recording is relevant to a formal or informal complaint against a member or the Department.
  2. A BWC recording may be saved indefinitely as part of a specific case if deemed relevant to a criminal, civil, or administrative matter.
  3. Members of the RMO are authorized to delete BWC recordings in accordance with the Department's established retention policies.