



DEPARTMENT NOTICE

23-045

Published: 3/24/23

Expires: 3/24/26

Activation of Body Worn Cameras

(Update DB 20-175)

The Body Worn Camera (BWC) is an effective tool the San Francisco Police Department has deployed to demonstrate our commitment to transparency, ensure the accountability of department members, increase the public's trust in officers, and to protect members from unjustified complaints of misconduct. The purpose of this Department Notice is to clarify the policies and procedures governing the Department's BWC program and to ensure members' effective and rigorous use of the BWC and adherence to the program.

BWC Procedure

Members shall keep their BWC **powered on** in **Buffering** mode.

The BWC is in **Buffering** mode when the power switch on the top of the unit is switched on, the red indicator is visible from the front of the camera, and the operation LED indicator light on top of BWC is flashing green.

Patrol and event supervisors shall ensure that members under their command are in compliance while working in any uniformed capacity when they may have to take law enforcement action or contact a member of the public.

Members shall ensure the entire event is captured during all mandated recording circumstances or their involvement at the incident is completed.

- When responding to calls for service with a potential for law enforcement activity or any of the mandatory recording circumstances to occur, members shall begin recording by pressing the **Event** button while enroute and prior to arriving on scene. The purpose of this directive is to ensure that members are not distracted by the necessity of activating the BWC during a high-risk or rapidly unfolding event.
- For self-initiated activity, such as traffic stops, pedestrian stops, and other law enforcement activity, including Mental Health Evaluations (interviews and detentions), members shall begin recording prior to approaching the person, vehicle, location
- When transporting detainees or custodies, members shall begin recording prior to the person entering the vehicle and are not to deactivate the BWC until after the person has exited the vehicle and been secured in the destination facility, or the facility designates that BWC recording shall be terminated at the entry threshold point.

- Unless an immediate officer safety concern exists, the *Event* button shall be activated as soon as safely possible and continue recording until the contact or incident is concluded. Nothing in this order precludes members from taking the necessary steps to assure officer's safety or the public's safety.

Police Facilities

Members shall turn the BWC off completely while in private areas of police facilities, including but not limited to locker rooms, restrooms, or other areas where they will not be in contact with members of the public who may be the suspect, witness, or victim of a crime.

BWC Evidence Metadata Procedure

- Prior to docking and uploading evidence, members shall title and categorize all recorded BWC footage utilizing the Axon app on their department issued cell phone.
- A BWC device containing BWC footage shall be docked at the end of the member's shift.
- Members shall not deactivate the location setting on the BWC device. The location setting allows improved classification of recorded footage for evidentiary purposes.
- Members shall log into their desktop Evidence.com accounts each shift to ensure the evidence from the previous shift has uploaded and is correctly titled and categorized.

Members are reminded of the mandated recordings outlined in Department General Order (DGO) 10.11, Body Worn Cameras.

Authorized Use

All on-scene members equipped with a BWC shall activate their BWC equipment by pressing the Event button to record in the following circumstances:

1. Detentions and arrests
2. Consensual encounters where the member suspects that the member of the public may have knowledge of criminal activity as a suspect, witness, or victim, except as noted in Section III, D.
3. 5150 evaluations
4. Traffic and pedestrian stops
5. Vehicle pursuits
6. Foot pursuits
7. Uses of force
8. When serving a search or arrest warrant
9. Conducting any of the following searches on one's person and/or property:
 - a. Incident to an arrest
 - b. Cursory

- c. Probable cause
 - d. Probation/parole
 - e. Consent
 - f. Vehicles
10. Transportation of arrestees and detainees
 11. During any encounter with a member of the public that becomes hostile
 12. In any situation when the recording would be valuable for evidentiary purposes
 13. Only in situations that serve a law enforcement purpose

Prohibited Use

Members shall not activate the BWC when encountering:

1. Sexual assault and child abuse victims during a preliminary investigation
2. Situations that could compromise the identity of confidential informants and undercover operatives
3. Strip searches

However, a member may record in these circumstances if the member can articulate an exigent circumstance that required deviation from the normal rule in these situations. Members shall not activate the BWC in a manner that is specifically prohibited by DGO 2.01, ***General Rules of Conduct***, Surreptitious Recordings and DGO 8.10, ***Guidelines for First Amendment Activities***.

Failure to abide by this policy may lead to discipline.


WILLIAM SCOTT
Chief of Police

Per DN 20-150, all sworn and non-sworn members shall electronically acknowledge this Department document in PowerDMS. Members whose duties are relevant to this document shall be held responsible for compliance. Any questions regarding this policy should be made to sfpd.writtendirectives@sfgov.org who will provide additional information.