



Subject: <b>Body Worn Cameras</b>		
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<b>Approved: Chief Luke Thompson</b>		

**1. Purpose**

The Byram Police Department has implemented a Body Worn Camera program to accomplish several objectives that include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- A. Allowing for the accurate documentation of police-public contacts, arrests, and critical incidents; and, to serve to enhance the accuracy of officer reports and courtroom testimony;
- B. Enhancing the agency’s ability to review probable cause for arrests, officer and suspect interactions, and evidence for investigative and prosecutorial purposes and to provide additional information for officer evaluation and training, and;
- C. Improving an officer’s ability to document crime and crash scenes or other events that include the confiscation and documentation of evidence or contraband.

This directive is intended to provide officers with instruction and procedures on when and how to use body-worn cameras (BWCs) so that officers may reliably record their contacts with individuals within the community.

**2. Policy**

Uniformed officers assigned BWCs shall activate their cameras during all encounters with individuals when carrying out the official duties of their position, including all encounters that result from an enforcement action such as a traffic stop or other reasonable suspicion stop of an individual. This policy does not govern the use of any covert recording devices used in undercover operations. Any employee that violates this directive will be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.

**3. Procedures**

Body-worn cameras are issued to all sworn employees of the Byram Police Department. Personnel will only use BWCs issued by the department and all data, images, video, and metadata captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the Byram Police Department. Issued cameras are the responsibility of the individual officers and will be used with reasonable care to ensure proper functioning. Equipment malfunctions, damage and/or loss to equipment shall be immediately reported to the officer’s supervisor for replacement and/or repair.

- A. When to use Body Worn Cameras
  - 1. BWCs shall be charged and ready for use prior to the beginning of the officer’s shift.
  - 2. BWCs shall be worn on the front of the uniform at all times by officers whose primary responsibilities are enforcement in nature.
  - 3. Officers shall activate the BWC to record all contacts with citizens in the performance of official duties and continue to record until either the completion of the event or until the officer leaves the scene. *During traffic stops, officers should activate the BWC prior to the actual stop location so to record radio traffic related to the stop. This will assist in identifying the recordings later to match up with citations and court preparation.*

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4. Administrative personnel and detectives shall wear and activate BWCs during enforcement activities in which they initiate to include traffic stops, reasonable suspicion stops, etc.
5. Whenever possible, officers should inform individuals that they are being recorded; especially in locations where a person may have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a residence, restroom, dressing room, etc. *Concerning privacy issues, BWCs shall be used during enforcement/investigative actions in places the officer has the legal authority and right to be. When individuals are present and are not relevant (juveniles, bystanders, etc.) to the enforcement action at hand, those individuals may be advised of the recording and asked to move to a position away from the camera's view.*
6. When multiple officers are present, all officers shall activate their BWCs to capture the different perspectives of the incident.
7. If an officer fails to activate the BWC, fails to record the entire contact, or interrupts the recording, the officer shall complete an incident report in the departmental report management system and document why a recording was not made, was interrupted, or was terminated.

**B. Prohibited Use/Recording**

1. BWCs will not be activated to record conversations of fellow officers, supervisors, or employees without their knowledge during routine and non-enforcement activities;
2. BWCs may not be activated to record investigative interactions with approved Confidential Informants when more than one officer is present;
3. BWCs will not be used to secretly or covertly record conversations of citizens, officers, or supervisors; and,
4. BWCs will not be used to record any off-duty or personal activity and will not be worn off-duty.

**C. Uploading Recordings to Department Servers**

Uploading recordings of BWCs is done automatically when the BWC is placed into a charging cradle placed throughout the police stations. Charging cradles are located in the patrol room, patrol supervisors' office, detectives' office, Commander of Uniformed Operations office and Office of Chief of Police. Officers will upload all recordings collecting during their shift prior to ending their work day.

**D. Reporting & Documentation**

Recordings from body-worn cameras do not replace written reports, however the existence of the recordings does not automatically necessitate a written report. Reports will be completed in accordance with other General Orders and written directives of the Byram Police Department. All written reports shall include a notation that body-worn camera recordings exist and all officers that made the recordings.

**4. Storage, Review, and Release of Recordings**

All media recorded and collected by the BWC is property of the Byram Police Department. Accessing, copying, or releasing any captured recordings without the approval of the Chief of Police is strictly prohibited.

**A. Storage**

All recordings are stored and maintained on computer servers in the Byram Police Department in accordance with guidelines established by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

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All recordings uploaded from BWCs are stored for a minimum of six (6) months. Officers will assign recordings related to arrests, uses of force, and DUIs to predefined categories. Recordings that do not fall into one of these categories may be assigned to other available categories if the need to retain such recordings goes beyond the initial six months. All videos assigned to categories will be backed up to other digital media and stored for a minimum of three (3) years. Recordings may also be "tagged" within the video management software. All "tagged" recordings will remain active on the initial server for an additional ninety (90) days. Recordings may be tagged to extend availability of online viewing for cases in misdemeanor court that get continued to a later date. Tagged recordings are also backed up in the same manner as those recordings assigned to categories.

## B. Review of Video

### 1. Citizen Review

Officers will NOT allow citizens to review video unless there is an articulable investigative reason to do so.

Citizens that wish to review video for their own court appearance shall make their requests via the appropriate open records request procedures or through legal discovery via the City's legal counsel.

### 2. Officer Review

Officers are given access to video uploaded to the server from the body-worn cameras. Officer shall review their recordings and assign to the appropriate categories if needed. Officers may review video prior to the preparation of written reports (except in the case of Use of Force discussed below) or preparation for court appearances.

Officers needing recordings made available for court shall make their requests to the Commander of Uniformed Operations. Media will be provided in a format that can be used in court. All media provided for court on any portable format shall be returned to the Commander immediately following the court session. Video may also be made available across network connections to a computer in the courtroom for the prosecutor and officers to review and present as evidence.

### 3. Use of Force Incidents

Officers use force based on their individual perceptions of circumstances presented to them in any specific moment in time and place. Although video will record actual events, those recordings will not necessarily reflect what the officer perceives during an incident when police force is used. In any situation where force is used and recorded by the BWC, the officer shall notify their immediate supervisor. The supervisor will impound the BWC and upload video via the charging station once the Use of Force report is complete.

In the event serious bodily injury or death occurs as a result of an officer's use of force, the BWC will be impounded by the Supervisor and turned over to a Commander and/or the Chief of Police. Video will be uploaded during the administrative review of the incident.

### 4. Criminal Investigation Detective (CID) Use

Detectives are given the ability to create "cases" in the BWC video management software. Cases allow for multiple videos to be collected in one place and assembled for presentation to prosecuting attorneys and juries within the judicial proceedings. Patrol officers that find the need for a case to be initiated with multiple videos may contact the Commander of Uniformed Operations for further instruction.

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5. Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors shall ensure that officers equipped with BWCs utilize them in accordance with policy and procedures defined in this directive. Supervisors will ensure that recordings are being reviewed by officers and assigned to appropriate categories as needed.

Supervisors will randomly review BWC videos to ensure that the equipment is operating properly and that officers are using the devices appropriately. Supervisors will be identify any areas in which additional training or guidance is required.

C. Release of BWC Recordings

The release of recordings through public records requests will be conducted in accordance with the policies for such requests established by the City of Byram. Ω

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