

## 12.540 BODY WORN CAMERA SYSTEM

### **References:**

City of Cincinnati Administrative Regulation No. 70  
 Procedure 12.205, Traffic Enforcement  
 Procedure 12.235, Operating a Vehicle Under the Influence (OVI): Processing & Arrest  
 Procedure 12.412, Domestic Violence  
 Procedure 12.535, Emergency Operation of Police Vehicles and Pursuit Driving  
 Procedure 12.537, Mobile Digital Video Recording Equipment  
 Procedure 12.545, Use of Force  
 Procedure 12.550, Discharging of Firearms by Police Personnel  
 Procedure 12.715, Property and Evidence: Confiscation, Accountability, Processing, Storage, and Release  
 Procedure 19.140, Outside Employment  
 Investigations Manual  
 Ohio Revised Code 149.43(A)(1)(a), (h) and (A)(2)(3)  
 Ohio Revised Code 2151.313; 2151.356-358; 2151.421(H); 2151.423  
 Ohio Revised Code 2933.52(B)(3)  
 5 USC §552a, Privacy Act of 1974  
 18 USC §3771(a)(8), Crime victims' rights  
 42 USC §3789g; 28 CFR 20.21(b) & 20.33(a)(3); OAC 4501:2-10-06, Dissemination and record keeping  
 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, US Constitution

### **Definitions:**

**Axon Body 3 (BWC)** – A Department approved, and authorized body worn recording device issued to officers to record audio and video consistent with Department policy and procedure.

**Incident** – An event requiring some degree of law enforcement action or response.

**EVIDENCE.COM** – An Axon system used for accessing recorded events. Officers have a unique login to enable viewing or uploading recorded events. The website address is <https://cincinnatiipdoh.evidence.com>.

**Axon Body 3 Dock** – An eight-port docking system which uploads video files, firmware updates, and charges the Axon BWC. The dock allows units to transfer recorded events to EVIDENCE.COM via an internet connection.

**Axon Respond** – A feature that allows the BWC to capture GPS coordinates and allows the ability for select designated personnel to live stream an activated BWC.

**Authorized Format** – An electronic format or physical copy of BWC footage.

**Axon Signal** – A Bluetooth beacon that can activate all BWCs in range (30 – 100 feet) or only your assigned BWC (based on settings). The beacon is activated when you place the TASER T7 CEW safety switch in the up (FIRE) position. The beacon will not operate when the CEW is in Function Test mode.

**Signal Sidearm (SSA)** – A device attached to your firearm’s holster that utilizes a Bluetooth beacon that has the ability to activate all BWCs in range (30 – 100 feet) or only your assigned BWC (based on settings). The beacon is activated when you remove your firearm from the holster.

**Purpose:**

Establish guidelines regarding the use, management, storage, release, and retention of video and audio files captured by the Body Worn Camera system.

BWC systems promote accountability and transparency for law enforcement by providing a video record of police activity. Police operations become more transparent to the public and help resolve questions following encounters between officers and citizens.

**Policy:**

The Department will preserve video for at least 90 days after the last recorded event. After the 90-day retention period, recordings not categorized for retention will be deleted consistent with the approved retention schedule. It is the responsibility of any investigator to categorize recordings beyond the 90-day retention period, if necessary. Recorded events necessary to the investigation and prosecution of criminal offenses will be uploaded and redacted by Police Records. A video containing possible criminal evidentiary footage may not be copied to an authorized format until after it has been redacted by Police Records according to current Ohio Public Records law. Requests for disc copies of a BWC video file will be forwarded to Police Records by completing the [online](#) Public Records Request.

Recorded events necessary for the investigation of administrative incidents (e.g., Use of Force, Citizen Complaints) will be categorized for proper retention by a supervisor and noted in the incident paperwork. The footage will be retained in compliance with the current records retention schedule as approved by the Cincinnati Records Commission.

Officers will keep their BWC powered on during their tour of duty.

Officers are required to activate their BWC system during all law enforcement-related encounters and activities as defined in this procedure. Officers will deactivate the BWC system only at the conclusion of the event, during transports with an activated DVR, or with supervisor approval. When an officer is involved in a police intervention shooting, their BWC will be subject to the process outlined in Procedure 12.550, Discharging of Firearms by Police Personnel.

Plainclothes officers wearing the external vest carrier when enforcement action is possible will wear and power on their BWC and follow activation procedures herein.

Officers have the right to use the BWC system (e.g., inside a private home/facility, public/private school) **as long as** they have a legal right to be there (e.g., call for service, valid search warrant, consent of owner). Officer safety and public safety take precedence over recording events. Under extenuating circumstances, utilization of the BWC system may not be possible (e.g., ambush/assault on a police officer, compromising the tactical advantage of police).

When this occurs, officers will report the incident to their supervisor. The supervisor will investigate and document the incident on a Form 17BWC.

Officers who fail to use the equipment as required or fail to report damage to the equipment are in violation of the Manual of Rules and Regulations and are subject to the disciplinary process for the CPD. Uniformed officers below the rank of captain, trained in the use of BWC systems, are required to operate the equipment.

SWAT and Civil Disturbance Response Team (CDRT) personnel will utilize their BWCs in high risk activities (i.e. search warrants, arrest warrants, crowd control) in accordance with their documented SOPs.

The start date of the 90-day grace period for officers for non-intentional BWC violations will begin after being trained in the use of BWC systems. Supervisors will refer to ETS for the date an officer was trained. Further information on BWC user operation can be found on the Department's intranet.

The Axon Respond feature provides for the ability of designated personnel to livestream a previously activated BWC. This access is restricted to Emergency Communication Center (ECC) supervisors (sworn and civilian), all Real Time Crime Center personnel, the BWC Program Coordinator, SWAT Commander and Department senior command staff as designated by the Police Chief. Access will be granted on a case by case basis by the Police Chief or designated command staff. The Axon Respond feature shall only be activated on an extremely limited basis under emergency or exigent circumstances.

Anytime an Axon Respond activation is made, a Form 17 to the Police Chief must be generated by the individual making the system access. The required Form 17 shall contain, in detail, the circumstances necessitating the Axon Respond activation. Upon request, the user of a livestreamed BWC will be issued a copy of the Form 17 following approval.

**Information:**

The Cincinnati Police Department's BWC program coordinator, Planning Section, Finance Management Section, and the Criminal Investigations Section, along with the City Manager's Office and the City Law Department engaged several stakeholder and community groups, e.g. local prosecutor, the Fraternal Order of Police Queen City Lodge No. 69, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Cincinnati Human Resources Commission, the Legal Aid Society of Cincinnati, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Women Helping Women in the development of a BWC procedure.

The utilization of video equipment facilitates the Department's objectives to collect evidence for criminal prosecution, provides an administrative inspection function, and assists in training officers to improve safety and tactics. BWC footage, in conjunction with witness statements, other video files etc., is one component of evidence collection to facilitate a thorough investigation.

Video files are the property of the CPD and are not to be duplicated and/or used without authorization from the Police Chief or their designee. Officers are not required to inform citizens they are being recorded with the BWC.

The BWC will record 30 seconds of buffered video when activated. The BWC program coordinator, who will train all officers on the use and operation of BWC systems, can be reached by e-mail at [BWC\\_Support@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:BWC_Support@cincinnati-oh.gov), or by responding to Information Technology Management & Systems, Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. In addition, the BWC program coordinator will continuously review the BWC program to ensure compliance with current policies and assess the progress of the BWC program.

Axon Signal and Signal Sidearm features are currently set to activate only an officer's assigned BWC.

**Procedure:**

A. Operating and Utilizing BWC systems

1. Equipment is the responsibility of the officer assigned and will be operated according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
  - a. Officers will wear all supplied components of the BWC systems and ensure the BWC is properly positioned to **clearly** record police activities regardless of uniform attire. Officers opting to wear the external vest carrier will attach the BWC to the provided bracket.

Proper Camera Positions:



Wearing centered on uniform shirt



Wearing centered when zipped



Wearing left aligned when unzipped

- 1) Officers shall inspect the BWC prior to their shift to ensure the BWC is assigned to them, and that the BWC is functioning properly during a roll call and/or field test. Officers will **not** use a BWC assigned to another officer without permission from a supervisor.
  - a) In the event a BWC is assigned to another officer, the supervisor will notify the BWC program coordinator with the pertinent information.
  - b) Officers will keep their BWC turned on during their tour of duty and will intermittently inspect their BWC to ensure it is functioning properly (i.e. flashing green LED).
- 2) Officers will immediately report a malfunctioning or usage of another officer's BWC to a supervisor.

- a) The supervisor will check the BWC by following appropriate troubleshooting steps.
  - b) If the supervisor is unable to resolve the problem, the BWC will be taken to Information Technology Management & Systems, Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, for issuance of a spare BWC. After 5:00 pm officers will contact an ECC supervisor for issuance of a spare BWC.
  - c) In cases of usage of another officer's BWC, the supervisor will contact the BWC program coordinator.
- b. If an officer fails to activate or deactivate their BWC according to policy or fails to upload their BWC in a timely manner, whether intentionally or accidentally, they will report the incident to their supervisor.
- 1) The supervisor will investigate and document the incident on a Form 17BWC, including any disciplinary recommendation.
  - 2) Original Form 17BWCs will be stored at the unit of assignment. The administrative supervisor will ensure a copy of the Form 17BWC is forwarded to Inspections Section.
- c. Two spare mounts will be issued to each district and kept in the district armory.
- 1) The spare mount will be documented in the Spare Mount Log when it is issued by a supervisor and when it is returned at the end of the officer's shift.
2. Officers will use BWC equipment to record **all** calls for service and self-initiated activities listed below. The BWC must be activated when the officer arrives on-scene or announces he/she is on-scene in the area and must be recorded in its entirety. This includes:
- a. While responding for calls for service in emergency mode.
  - b. Traffic stops, including the investigation of a vehicle and occupants already stopped or parked.
    - 1) Officers equipped with the BWC (primary or backup officers) will continue to record until the stopped vehicle departs or officers leave the scene.
  - c. During the entirety of traffic or foot pursuits.
    - 1) Activate the BWC before initiating a traffic or foot pursuit.
    - 2) Deactivate the BWC when a vehicle or subject cannot be located.
  - d. When assisting other officers on any call for service or self-initiated activity.

- 1) Officers **must** ensure they are added to the CAD incident when assisting other officers.
  - e. **All** requests for consent to search without a warrant, including searches of persons, buildings, or vehicles, will be recorded. Both audio and video recordings will be made of the request and consent when practical.
  - f. Requests for searches and deployments of drug-detection canines involving vehicles, when practical.
  - g. Recordings of all persons physically arrested and transported in any Department vehicle to any location unless an activated DVR is used.
  - h. Officers have the discretion to activate the BWC when they believe an event may have evidentiary value.
  - i. Officers are not required to initiate or cease recording an event solely at the request of a citizen.
  - j. Officers will complete the BWC Request Form, via RMS Form 17 Module, for incidents involving:
    - 1) Signing Warrants on Individuals
    - 2) Domestic Violence Incidents
    - 3) Capturing Consent to Search
    - 4) Officer Request
    - 5) Training Purposes
    - 6) Positive Interaction
      - a) After officers have completed the BWC Request Form they will workflow it to Police Records who will categorize the footage for proper retention.
        - 1] Incidents listed under section H.3. will be managed by a supervisor. Officers will not complete the BWC Request Form.
3. Calls for Service Dispositions
    - a. Once the officer has arrived on-scene, any incident **must** be cleared with a disposition **before** responding to another call for service. After clearing an incident BWC recording should be stopped (5 second hold of the Event button).
      - 1) If the officer has not arrived on-scene, “preempting” from a call for service is acceptable. The dispatcher will clear the officer from the call for service and hold it for them.
  4. The BWC may be deactivated after:

- a. Clearing the call for service/self-initiated activity.
    - 1) Officers are not required to keep the BWC activated while completing paperwork, e.g. case report, **as long as** they are not interacting with the public. The officer may initiate a "STARUN" to complete paperwork, if needed.
    - 2) Recording in-between calls for service/incidents is not required.
  - b. The DVR is activated and recording a subject being transported in the police vehicle.
    - 1) If officers continue their investigation regardless of DVR usage, they will continue BWC recording.
  - c. A supervisor directs the officer to deactivate the BWC.
5. Officers will **not** use the BWC to record the following:
- a. Confidential informants or undercover officers.
    - 1) Officers may record any enforcement action (e.g., traffic or investigatory stop) requested by a plainclothes officer.
    - 2) If an officer (uniformed or undercover) suspects an undercover officer or a confidential informant was captured on BWC or DVR during a radio run, the officer is to contact the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) via the radio and request that car number "REDACT" be added to the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD).
  - b. Department personnel during routine, non-enforcement related activities, unless recording is required by a court order or is authorized as part of an administrative or criminal investigation.
  - c. In any place where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g., restroom, locker room) **except** during an active incident (e.g., foot pursuit that leads into a locker room).
  - d. In any detention facility or hospital facility (when confidential patient information may be recorded) **except** during an active incident (e.g., disorderly person).
  - e. During discussions/briefs regarding tactics and/or strategies.
    - 1) Officers will narrate on camera the specific reason for shutting off the BWC prior to deactivation.
    - 2) Officers will immediately reactivate their BWC after the discussion/briefs have been concluded.

## B. BWC Utilization by Officers in Non-Uniformed Assignments

1. When investigators or officers in specialized, non-uniformed assignments are functioning in a law enforcement capacity where enforcement action may be possible, or they are wearing an external vest carrier or identifying themselves as law enforcement, they are required to wear and power on their BWC, and follow activation procedures herein.
  - a. Officers will wear the external vest carrier when executing an arrest warrant, search warrant, during stakeouts which may require enforcement action, and when directed by a supervisor.

## C. Axon Respond Capabilities

### 1. Livestream

- a. An officer's BWC may be livestreamed via Evidence.com to be viewed by assigned personnel in real-time. Access is restricted to ECC supervisors (sworn and civilian), all Real Time Crime Center personnel, the BWC Program Coordinator, SWAT Commander and Department senior command staff as designated by the Police Chief. Access can only occur if the BWC is already recording.
  - 1) Access will be granted on a case by case basis by the Police Chief or designated command staff.
- b. The purpose of an activation is to establish a livestream to gain crucial information such as officer location (GPS) and current situation. The information will be relayed to responding units to provide situational and tactical awareness and expedite help as warranted. BWC users will receive a notification on their camera when a livestream begins.
- c. The livestream feature shall only be activated on an extremely limited basis under emergency or exigent circumstances. These include:
  - 1) Active shooter response.
  - 2) Officer not answering radio.
  - 3) Officer needs assistance situations.
  - 4) Active SWAT incidents.
- d. **Anytime** a livestream activation is made, a Form 17 to the Police Chief must be generated by the individual making the system access. The required Form17 will contain, in detail, the circumstances necessitating the livestream activation.
  - 1) Upon request, the user of a livestreamed BWC will be issued a copy of the Form 17 following approval.

## 2. GPS Functionality

- a. Each BWC includes GPS functionality, which is available only upon BWC activation.
- b. An officer's location will be visible on the Respond map and available to supervisors when a BWC is activated.
  - 1) Use is restricted to supervisors for law enforcement and administrative functions only.

## D. Viewing, Altering and/or Sharing BWC Recordings

1. **All** access to BWC footage is automatically logged to create an electronic audit trail.
2. Officers shall not edit, alter, erase, duplicate, copy, share, or otherwise distribute in any manner BWC recordings without prior approval.
  - a. Requests to delete portions of a BWC recording (e.g., in the event of a personal recording) must be submitted for approval on a Form 17 to the police chief, who will review in accordance with state record retention laws. All requests and final decisions shall be kept on file.
  - b. Police personnel will not personally forward BWC video(s) to prosecutors, even when requested to do so; refer them instead to Police Records Section to obtain BWC evidence.
3. Officers may view BWC footage at the district utilizing vendor-approved software and equipment or on any computer with internet capability. Viewing of BWC footage is for official use **only**.
4. Officers will complete the BWC Request Form in RMS for any recorded sequences that may be of value for training purposes.
5. When an officer is involved in a police intervention shooting, their BWC will be subject to the process outlined in Procedure 12.550, Discharging of Firearms by Police Personnel.
  - a. Review of the BWC footage at Criminal Investigations Section (CIS) will be made according to the investigative process and at the discretion of the Investigations Bureau commander or their designee.
6. Officers shall not use non-agency equipment or devices to record or download video from BWCs.
7. It is the responsibility of any investigator to categorize recordings beyond the 90-day retention period, if necessary.

## E. BWC Management

1. Officers will insert BWC systems not in use into its dock by the end of their shift.
  - a. Once connected, BWC footage will be automatically uploaded to Evidence.com. Evidence.com software will integrate Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system calls for service with the corresponding BWC footage.
  - b. After uploading recordings, officers may take their BWC systems home if working an outside employment extension of police service detail/Police Visibility Overtime (PVO) before their next scheduled tour of duty.
  - c. Officers off duty (e.g. vacation) for more than five (5) days following their tour of duty will insert their BWC system into its dock where it will remain until the officer returns to duty. Refer to E.1.b. if working a detail/PVO during this time.
2. Two spare mounts will be kept in each district's armory. Only supervisors will assign spare mounts to officers.

## F. Court and Evidentiary Video Files/Redactions

1. When a BWC video file is required for court/evidentiary purposes, the Prosecutor's Office will contact Police Records to request the redaction process be initiated.
  - a. Police Records will redact the BWC video file(s) according to their Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and notify the Prosecutor's Office when the files are available for review.
  - b. If no BWC video file exists, Police Records will advise the Prosecutor's Office. Police Records may contact an administrative supervisor for any questions regarding video file existence.
2. Recording Auto Accidents Involving Police Equipment
  - a. If a BWC-equipped officer is involved in an auto accident, they should activate the BWC if physically able.
    - 1) When activated, the BWC will record 30 seconds of buffered video (possibly recording the events prior to the accident).
  - b. The supervisor who completes the Form 90S, Supervisor's Review of Vehicle Crash, will review the officer's BWC video for any footage relevant to the auto accident.
    - 1) If the officer's BWC contains relevant footage, the supervisor will upload the video file and label it for proper retention.

- c. The supervisor will note in the Form 90S that BWC footage is available and forward the auto accident paperwork (90S, BMV3303, etc.) through the chain of command to Fleet Management.
  - d. The City Solicitor's Office will have access to these video files as needed for legal purposes.
    - 1) Fleet Management will maintain a computer database and act as liaison with the City Solicitor's Office.
3. When a traffic stop involving an individual arrested for Operating a Vehicle Under the Influence (OVI) is captured by a BWC as well as the DVR:
- a. Clearly mark the Form 527, Arrest Report, Ohio Multi-count Traffic Tag (MUTT), and the Form 495, Cincinnati Police Department Intoxication Report with "**ACE**" and "**BWC**" in bold letters.
    - 1) If the City Prosecutor's Office needs a copy of the BWC for court purposes, they will contact Police Records to request redaction.

#### G. Records Requests/Redactions

- 1. All requests for BWC video files must be made prior to the end of the 90-day retention and availability period. After the 90-day retention period recordings not categorized for retention will be deleted consistent with the approved retention schedule.
  - a. Authorized format copies of video files, e.g. on disc, must be approved by Police Records and/or the district/section/unit commander.
- 2. Requests for copies of video files originating from within the Department must be submitted by completing the [online](#) Public Records Request to Police Records.
  - a. Officers wishing to obtain a copy of their own video files will submit an online Public Records Request to Police Records.
    - 1) Police Records will redact the video file and forward a copy, in an authorized format, to the officer.
    - 2) Video files are to be used for official business only.
- 3. Outside requests for video files must be submitted to Police Records on a Form 29, Police Records Public Records Request. The request can be completed online by emailing the Form 29 to [cpdrecords@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:cpdrecords@cincinnati-oh.gov) or filling out an online form at <http://cincinnati-oh.gov/noncms/police/records/>. Ohio Public Records Law does not require requestors to submit requests in writing. Any oral request will be completed on Form 29 by Police Records or district personnel, as outlined in Procedure 18.120, Public Records Requests.
  - a. Police Records will follow their SOP for the fulfillment of record requests, including completing redactions required by law.





- a) When applicable, any member of the public, parent or legal guardian of a minor, or a deceased subject's next of kin or legally authorized designee who is a subject of video footage, shall be permitted to review that specific video footage during a citizen complaint investigation.
  - 4. BWC footage used in Department investigations will be retained in compliance with the current records retention schedule as approved by the Cincinnati Records Commission. Refer to: <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/law/public-records/records-retention-schedules/>.
- I. Biometric Searches
  - 1. Stored video and audio from a BWC shall not:
    - a. Be used to create a database or pool of mug shots
    - b. Be used as fillers in photo arrays
    - c. Be searched using facial recognition software
      - 1) This does not prohibit CPD from using recognition software to analyze the recording of a particular incident when reasonable suspicion exists that a specific suspect or person in need of assistance may be a subject of a particular recording.
- J. Inspection Section Responsibilities
  - 1. Inspection Section will conduct a quarterly audit sampling to verify BWC procedure compliance by determining if required BWC supervisory reviews were completed.
- K. District/Section/Unit Commander Responsibilities
  - 1. Each district commander will assign five (5) BWC video supervisory reviews per district each week.
    - a. The assignment of the BWC video reviews is at the discretion of the district commanders. The reviews should include videos from all officers under their command consisting of both on duty and outside employment extension of police service detail/PVO videos.
  - 2. Specialized Unit (e.g. SWAT, CDRT, Any Task Force, VCS Units, Fugitive Apprehension Unit, etc.) Commanders will assign BWC video supervisory reviews based on 15 percent (15%) of the unit's number of deployments/law enforcement activities per month.

- L. Outside Employment Extension of Police Service Detail/Police Visibility Overtime (PVO)
1. Officers will follow this procedure when working an outside employment extension of police service detail/PVO.
    - a. Officers are not required to insert the BWC system into its dock at the end of their detail/PVO **unless**:
      - 1) The officer was involved in an incident requiring an investigation by a supervisor (e.g. 18TBFP investigation).
        - a) An officer's BWC system can be inserted into a dock at **any** district to upload footage.
    - b. If the BWC system was activated during any portion of the detail/PVO, but no supervisory investigation was required, officers will insert their BWC system into its dock by the end of their next shift to upload any footage in a timely manner.
      - 1) Officers off duty (e.g. vacation) for more than five (5) days following the detail/PVO will insert their BWC system into its dock where it will remain until the officer returns to duty.
    - c. Officers shall ensure their BWC system is fully charged prior to any uniform patrol activities.