

Campus Police Body-Worn Cameras

Benefits, considerations, and promising practices for campus leaders

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Research indicates body-worn cameras (BWCs) can reduce the use of excessive force within officer/citizen interactions.
2. An increasing number of police officers indicate cameras are indispensable to their work, noting that the unbiased third-party account of a BWC can help heal divisive issues within the community.
3. Implementing a BWC program should be carefully considered as it becomes increasingly difficult to scale back once a campus community comes to expect the availability of video recordings.
4. Most police agencies prefer cameras that range in price from \$800 to \$1,200. However, data storage is commonly reported as the largest cost factor.
5. Clear guidelines and policies for BWC use are critical and should be reviewed regularly and updated as warranted.

INTRODUCTION

Initially introduced via in-car cameras to provide evidence of intoxicated driving, the concept of video recorded police-citizen interactions is not new within law enforcement. Technological advancements, reduced costs, and the realization of additional benefits have led to expanded use of video recordings by municipal police forces. Many university police forces have piloted or adopted the use of body-worn cameras (BWCs) by their campus law enforcement/safety officials. Institutional leadership should consider the decision to use BWCs carefully given that once a



campus community comes to expect the availability of video records, it becomes increasingly difficult to scale back these programs, according to Chuck Wexler, Executive Director of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) (Miller, Toliver, & PERF, 2014).

After considering the potential risks, many institutions have piloted or fully implanted BWCs with their campus police given the growing body of evidence to support the effectiveness of these programs. For example, recent research has indicated that use of BWCs can reduce the use of excessive force within officer/citizen interactions (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2015). Similarly, as more police adopt BWC protocols, an increasing number of officers indicate that they find the cameras indispensable to their work, noting that the unbiased third-party account of a BWC can help heal divisive issues within the community (Siegel, 2016).

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To help assist APLU senior leaders who might be considering pilot or full-scale BWC programs, this report provides an overview of the topline issues that institutions should consider. While helpful to many higher education stakeholders, this report is focused on providing senior higher education leaders with (1) an exploration of the potential benefits and risks that can result from the use of BWCs grounded in extant literature; (2) a discussion of what institutions need to know, including cost considerations and a synopsis of prudent policies for BWC use; (3) lessons learned from early institutional adopters of BWCs; and, (4) a list of additional resources collected from the National Center for Campus Public Safety (NCCPS) on BWCs, including research, policy assistance, online resources, and trainings.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

For many institutional leaders and campus security directors, the decision to implement body-worn cameras comes from a thoughtful process regarding the best ways to record interactions between officers and various members of the public and campus community. Key to such deliberation is to remember that BWCs would provide an additional mechanism for recording such interactions—they do not replace traditional measures. As one might expect, this additional data point includes a number of potential benefits as well as some potential risks that institutional leaders will want to mitigate.

In 2016, researchers from George Mason University released a report that included a comprehensive review of all empirical research conducted on BWC programs (Lum, Koper, Merola, Scherer, & Reiou, 2015). The report found 14 empiric studies on BWCs (over half of which

used randomized controlled experiments) and 30 in-progress empiric studies. This review indicates that while there is a growing evidence base for the efficacy of BWC programs, the research is limited. Moreover, this bulk of extant literature was not conducted on college campuses; therefore, these emerging findings should be carefully applied within postsecondary contexts. In addition to indicating benefits resulting from BWCs, existing research has also clarified officer perspectives on their use. For instance, despite public concerns that officers would be unfavorable to the use of BWCs, a growing number of studies found that officers tend to have positive perspectives on BWCs and that those with concerns shift towards positive perspectives after implementation (e.g., Ellis, Jenkins, & Smith, 2015; Jennings, Fridell, & Lynch, 2014; Owens, Mann, & Mckenna, 2014).

Research consistently indicates that the benefits of BWC programs come from increased transparency and accountability. For example, a recent study using a longitudinal, randomized controlled design to explore the effects of BWCs on police use of force found that officers who did not wear body cameras were roughly two times more likely to use force in control conditions than officers who wore body cameras (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2015). Unsurprisingly, the researchers went on to find that the number of complaints filed against officers dropped 90% from 0.7 complaints /1,000 contacts to 0.07 complaints/1,000 contacts with the use of BWCs. BWCs also allow law enforcement official and campus security directors to address systemic and structural issues within their departments. In a survey of police officials, PERF found that many police officials remarked that,

Body-worn cameras have allowed them to identify potential weaknesses within their agencies and to develop solutions for improvement, such as offering new training programs or revising their departmental policies and protocols (Miller, Toliver, & PERF, 2014, p. 8).

Despite the growing evidence regarding the benefits of BWCs, there are some important concerns for institutional leaders to consider. Careful consideration will need to be given to how this technology might be utilized within a postsecondary context; especially considering that campus officers are often asked to intervene in non-criminal situations.

Similarly, institutions will have to navigate potential officer concerns with BWCs. Prior to implementation, officers commonly share concerns (Miller, Toliver, & PERF, 2014) that these programs may indicate a lack of trust from supervisors. As such, it is vital for an institution to clearly

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articulate how video footage will be used regarding officer performance. One way to address these concerns is to consult existing programs' administrative restrictions and procedures to help ensure the program is well-developed.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Cost Considerations

The costs associated with use of BWCs range widely depending on the features of the device, specifically functionality, battery life, and storage capacity. While such devices currently range from \$120 to \$2,000; PERF found that most police agencies prefer cameras that range in price from \$800 to \$1,200. This upfront investment is not usually the largest cost consideration; rather, data storage is commonly reported as the largest cost factor.

**\$5,000-
\$10,000**

**Cost of video storage
for 50 full-time
officers' recordings for
one month**

Institutions will have to carefully consider the budget implications related to larger questions concerning how many videos will be produced, how long those recordings are kept, and where or how those recordings are stored. These questions should be considered by both campus police executives and legal counsel to discuss the appropriate ways that recordings can and should be used in disciplinary or legal cases. Some campuses choose to store these recordings on an online database which may be managed by a third-party vendor, while others choose to store recordings on an in-house server. The first option requires fees to the third-party vendor and typically a multi-year contract while the second option requires a larger up-front investment in IT infrastructure and hardware. While costs for storage can vary widely, some agencies have noted that video storage for 50 full-time officers' recordings for one month can range between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Institutional leaders considering BWC programs should pay close attention to state laws regarding the length of time required for storing videos which can vary from state to state. At least eight states—Indiana, Oregon, Illinois, Nevada, California, New Hampshire, Nebraska, Georgia—have specific legislation regarding the length of time agencies are required to store video footage which can range from 6 to 12 months (Callahan, 2016). Here again, it is imperative for institutions to consult with their legal counsel and local prosecutors in constructing data practices for recordings that may be used in criminal cases.

Finally, other cost considerations include personnel to manage the program, administrate the data storage, as well as initial and ongoing training or development for implementation of the program. Many agencies appoint at least one full-time officer to manage the BWC

program and, depending on the size of an institution and the amount of video captured, significant staff resources are needed to review and categorize videos. In particular, once recordings are parsed as evidentiary or non-evidentiary, evidentiary videos must be further categorized by type of incident captured (e.g., robbery, intoxication, or vandalism). Some agencies have invested in additional infrastructure to make the use of videos more efficient and thereby more cost-effective. For instance, some institutions have invested in automated processes that link recordings to records management systems (RMS) or purchased electronic tablets that allow officers to view and tag videos while they are in the field.

Policy Considerations

Charles Ramsey, retired Police Commissioner of Philadelphia Police Department, stated a critical policy consideration regarding BWCs when he noted, “Because technology is advancing faster than policy, it’s important that we keep having discussions about what these new tools mean for us. We have to ask ourselves the hard questions. What do these technologies mean for constitutional policing?” (Miller, Toliver, & PERF, 2014, p. 1)

While the need for continued evolution will exist with new technologies, there are some universal principles that should guide the development of effective policies for BWCs and the use of the data they collect. Such policies should cover several fronts, including application in the field and within investigation and adjudication, as well as existing technology. Institutions should collaborate with various stakeholders to develop these policies in accordance with various institutional, local, state, and federal guidelines.

In 2014 the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) provided a technology brief in response to new forms of data collection, including data collected by BWCs, and rooted their policy recommendations in the following universal principles. While these principles are aimed at police agencies, they provide an excellent foundation for postsecondary institutions to shape policy and practices.

1. Specification of Use—Agencies should define the purpose, objectives, and requirements for implementing specific technologies, and identify the types of data captured, stored, generated, or otherwise produced.

“We have to keep debating the advantages and disadvantages. If we embrace this new technology, we have to make sure that we are using it to help us do our jobs better.”

—Charles Ramsey, retired Philadelphia Police Commissioner

#6 *Agencies should employ open and public communication and decision-making.*

2. Policies and Procedures—Agencies should articulate in writing, educate personnel regarding, and enforce agency policies and procedures governing adoption, deployment, use, and access to the technology and the data it provides. These policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and whenever the technology or its use, or use of the data it provides significantly changes.

3. Privacy and Data Quality— The agency should assess the privacy risks and recognize the privacy interests of all persons, articulate privacy protections in agency policies, and regularly review and evaluate technology deployment, access, use, data sharing, and privacy policies to ensure data quality (i.e., accurate, timely, and complete information) and compliance with local, state, and federal laws, constitutional mandates, policies, and practice.

4. Data Minimization and Limitation—Agencies should recognize that only those technologies, and only those data, that are strictly needed to accomplish the specific objectives approved by the agency will be deployed, and only for so long as it demonstrates continuing value and alignment with applicable constitutional, legislative, regulatory, judicial, and policy mandates.

5. Performance Evaluation—Agencies should regularly monitor and evaluate the performance and value of technologies to determine whether continued deployment and use is warranted on operational, tactical, and technical grounds.

6. Transparency and Notice—Agencies should employ open and public communication and decision-making regarding the adoption, deployment, use, and access to technology, the data it provides, and the policies governing its use. When and where appropriate, the decision-making process should also involve governing/oversight bodies, particularly in the procurement process. Agencies should provide notice, when applicable, regarding the deployment and use of technologies, as well as make their privacy policies available to the public. There are practical and legal exceptions to this principle for technologies that are lawfully deployed in undercover investigations and legitimate, approved covert operations.

7. Security—Agencies should develop and implement technical, operational, and policy tools and resources to establish and ensure appropriate security of the technology (including networks and infrastructure) and the data it provides to safeguard against risks of loss, unauthorized access or use, destruction, modification, or unintended or inappropriate disclosure. This principle includes meeting state and federal security mandates and having procedures in place to respond if a data breach, loss, compromise, or unauthorized disclosure occurs. This includes whether, how, and when affected persons will be notified, and remedial and corrective actions to be taken.

8. Data Retention, Access and Use—Agencies should have a policy that clearly articulates that data collection, retention, access, and use practices are aligned with their strategic and tactical objectives, and that data are retained in conformance with local, state, and/or federal statute/law or retention policies, and only as long as it has a demonstrable, practical value.

9. Auditing and Accountability—Agencies and their sworn and civilian employees, contractors, subcontractors, and volunteers should be held accountable for complying with agency, state, and federal policies surrounding the deployment and use of the technology and the data it provides. All access to data derived and/or generated from the use of relevant technologies should be subject to specific authorization and strictly and regularly audited to ensure policy compliance and data integrity. Sanctions for non-compliance should be defined and enforced. (IACP, 2014, pp. 2-4)

LESSONS FROM EARLY ADOPTERS

One important lesson from early adopters of BWCs is the importance of engaging officers, community members, policymakers, administrators, legal counsel, and other stakeholders in conversations about the program and its guidelines throughout the implementation process. Open communication prior to and during implementation can increase the perceived legitimacy of the program, educate the community about the use of these cameras, and frame the benefits such programs can provide for the entire campus and community early on.

The following table describes other lessons learned from early adopters regarding engaging the public and various stakeholders about BWC programs. Page references correspond to PERF's 2014 report, [*Implementing a body-worn camera program*](#).



APLU thanks the National Center for Campus Public Safety (NCCPS) for its support in the development of this brief. For more details about NCCPS, please visit www.nccpsafety.org.

No.	Lesson Learned	Page Reference(s)
1	Engaging the community prior to implementing a camera program can help secure support for the program and increase the perceived legitimacy of the program within the community.	pp.21-22; 24
2	Agencies have found it useful to communicate with the public, local policymakers, and other stakeholders about what the cameras will be used for and how the cameras will affect them.	pp.21-22; 24
3	Social media is an effective way to facilitate public engagement about body-worn cameras.	pp.21-22; 24
4	Transparency about the agency's camera policies and practices, both prior to and after implementation, can help increase public acceptance and hold agencies accountable. Examples of transparency include posting policies on the agency's website and publicly releasing video recordings of controversial incidents.	pp.21-22; 24
5	When presenting officers with any new technology, program, or strategy, the best approach includes efforts by agency leaders to engage officers on the topic, explain the goals and benefits of the initiative, and address any concerns officers may have.	pp.26-27
6	Briefings, roll calls, and meetings with union representatives are effective means to communicate with officers about the agency's body-worn camera program.	pp.26-27
7	Creating an implementation team that includes representatives from across the agency can help strengthen program legitimacy and ease implementation.	pp.26-27
8	Agencies have found that officers support a body-worn camera program if they view the cameras as useful tools: e.g., as a technology that helps to reduce complaints and produce evidence that can be used in court or in internal investigations.	pp.26-27
9	Recruiting an internal "champion" to help inform officers about the benefits of the cameras has proven successful in addressing officers' concerns about embracing the new technology.	pp.26-27
10	Taking an incremental approach to implementation can help make deployment run more smoothly. This can include testing cameras during a trial period, rolling out cameras slowly, or initially assigning cameras to tech savvy officers.	pp.26-27
11	Educating oversight bodies about the realities of using cameras can help them to understand operational challenges and why there may be situations in which officers are unable to record. This can include demonstrations to judges, attorneys, and civilian review boards about how the cameras operate.	pp.28-30

Source: Miller, L., Toliver, J., & Police Executive Research Forum, 2014, p. 67

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Publications:

[Body-Worn Cameras in 2016](#) – PoliceOne, 2016

[A Handbook for Public Safety Officials: Developing the Policy, Technology and Operational Strategies Needed for a Future-Proof Body Camera Program](#) – Emergency Management, Government Technology, Insight, 2015

[Body-Worn Video Cameras for Law Enforcement Assessment Report](#) – U.S. Department of Homeland Security's System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER) Program, 2015

[Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program: Recommendations and Lessons Learned](#) – Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), 2014

[Office of Justice Programs Comprehensive Body-Worn Camera Program Fact Sheet](#) - Department of Justice (DOJ), 2015

[Police Body-Mounted Cameras: With Right Policies in Place, a Win for All](#) – American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), 2015

[Police Officer Body-Worn Cameras: Assessing the Evidence](#) – Office of Justice Programs (OJP), 2014

[A Primer on Body-Worn Cameras for Law Enforcement](#) – National Institute of Justice (NIJ), 2012

[Existing and Ongoing Body Worn Camera Research: Knowledge Gaps and Opportunities](#) – George Mason University, 2016

[Officer Body-Worn Cameras- Capturing Objective Evidence with Quality Technology and Focused Policies](#) – David K. Bakardjiev, 2015

[Enhancing Police Accountability Through an Effective on-Body Camera Program for MPD Officers](#) – Police Complaints Board, 2014

[Police Body-Worn Cameras](#) – Data & Society Research Institute, 2015

[Body Worn Cameras on Police: Results from a National Survey of Public Attitudes](#) – University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2015

[Police Body-Worn Cameras: Evidentiary Benefits and Privacy Threats](#) – American Constitution Society for Law and Policy, 2015

[When Cameras Are Rolling: Privacy Implications of Body-Mounted Cameras on Police](#) – Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems, 2016

[Body-Worn Cameras: A Step Toward Trust and Legitimacy for Campus Police](#) – Elliott, Jaycee, University Honors Theses, Paper 146, 2015

[Evaluating the Impact of Officer Worn Body Cameras in the Phoenix Police Department](#) – Arizona State University, 2014

[Body-Worn Camera Feasibility Study Report](#) – U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2015

[Body-Worn Cameras in NYC: An Assessment of NYPD's Pilot Program and Recommendations to Promote Accountability](#) – New York City Department of Investigation and the Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD, 2015

[Getting to Win-Win: The Use of Body-Worn Cameras in Virginia Policing](#) – American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia, 2015

[Video Analysis for Body-worn Cameras in Law Enforcement](#) – Computing Community Consortium, 2015

[10 limitations of body cams you need to know for your protection](#) – Force Science Institute

[The Use of Body-Worn Cameras by Law Enforcement](#) – The Constitution Project, 2015

[Police Body Cameras in Domestic and Sexual Assault Investigations: Considerations and Unanswered Questions](#) – Battered Women’s Justice Project, 2015

Policy Assistance:

[Body-Worn Cameras Model Policy](#) – International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), 2014.

[A Model Act for Regulating the Use of Wearable Body Cameras by Law Enforcement](#) – American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), 2015

[Body-worn Camera Procedural Reference Guide](#) – Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions

[Body-worn Camera Policy](#) – Maryland Police Training Commission

[Body Worn Camera Policy](#) – San Francisco Police Department

[Body Camera Policy](#) – Houston Police Department

[Body Worn Video Policy](#) – Los Angeles Police Department

Online Resources:

[National Body-Worn Camera Toolkit](#) – Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), 2015

[Body Worn Cameras](#) – U.S. General Services Administration

Training:

[Evaluating the Impact of Officer Worn Body Cameras in the Phoenix Police Department Webinar](#) – Smart Policing Initiative (SPI), Phoenix Police Department, and Arizona State University (ASU), 2014

Articles:

[Research on Body-Worn Cameras and Law Enforcement](#) – National Institute of Justice (NIJ)

[Body-Worn Cameras: In Support of Justice on University Campuses](#) – EDUCAUSE

[The Future is Here: How Police Officers’ Videos Protect Officers and Departments](#) – The Police Chief

[Considering Police Body Cameras](#) – Harvard Law Review

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PRODUCED BY

Office of Research & Policy Analysis
Office of Public Affairs

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