

PURPOSE

01. Body Worn Audio/Video Systems

The University of California is committed to officer safety and public safety. The University has equipped its police departments with body worn audio-visual cameras (“BWV’s”, “devices” or “cameras”) for use as part of the officer’s uniform for the recording of field activity in the course of official police duties. The cameras are intended to provide a visual and audio record of police duties, including public contacts, arrests, and critical incidents. BWV’s provide documentation to be used in criminal investigations and prosecutions, internal or administrative investigations, training, and other circumstances. They also serve to enhance the accuracy of police reports, testimony in court, and enhance the Department’s community relationship-based policing efforts.

Body worn cameras provide a limited perspective of any encounter and must be considered with all available facts and evidence, such as officer perception, witness statements, officer interviews, other available video documentation, forensic and/or expert analysis, and documentary evidence. The cameras cannot always show the full narrative nor do they capture an entire scene. The use of cameras does not reduce or alter the requirement to provide thorough written documentation as required by this or other policies.

Persons reviewing recordings must be cautious before conclusions are reached about what the video shows, or when evaluating the appropriateness of an officer’s actions in a particular situation. Evaluating an officer’s actions must take into account a variety of factors and other circumstances.

The University is committed to officer safety and public safety. Officers must follow existing officer safety policies when contacting citizens or conducting vehicle stops as outlined in Department policies and procedures. Officer safety and the safety of the public shall always be the primary consideration, not the ability to record an event.

This policy is intended to balance the respect for privacy and other University values with legal, policy, and administrative obligations. Officers should remain sensitive to the dignity of all individuals being recorded and exercise sound discretion at all times.

POLICY

02. Required Users.

The following sworn personnel, from Lieutenant through Officer, are required to wear the BWV system while on duty, unless otherwise exempted by this Chapter:

- (a) Uniformed personnel while on regular assignment or on overtime status;
- (b) Detectives working in the field in an enforcement or specialized investigative (e.g., gang task force, violent crime task force) capacity, unless the use of BWV may compromise the identity of an undercover officer, confidential informant, or jeopardize tactics;
- (c) Personnel serving a search warrant, unless the use of the BWV may compromise the identity of an undercover officer, confidential informant, or jeopardize officer safety or tactics. Any exception to recording pursuant to this subsection (c) must receive prior approval from the Chief of Police or designee;
- (d) Other sworn personnel deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police or designee.

03. Department Issued Equipment Only.

Officers assigned a BWV camera must not use any other non-Department issued video or audio equipment, such as personally owned video or audio equipment, mobile devices or cell phones, to record enforcement or investigative activities involving members of the public unless authorized by the Chief of Police or designee.

Nothing in this policy precludes officers or other Department personnel from using authorized still photography equipment.

04. Location of Body Worn Camera.

The BWV camera generally consists of a body-mounted camera with a built-in microphone. The BWV shall be worn on the outside of the outermost garment (e.g., load-bearing vest, raincoat) or other departmental approved mounting option, on the upper torso, and facing forward in such a way to facilitate optimum recording field of view.

05. Required Activation of Body Worn Camera.

Subject to the exceptions contained in this Chapter, or pursuant to the direction of a supervisor, officers shall activate their BWV device prior to initiating any criminal investigative or enforcement activity involving a member of the public, including all:

- (a) Vehicle or bicycle enforcement stops;
- (b) Pedestrian stops;
- (c) Calls for service;
- (d) Foot pursuits;
- (e) Searches (except strip searches);
- (f) Arrests;
- (g) Uses of force;
- (h) In-custody transports;
- (i) Witness or victim interviews;
- (j) Forced entry search warrants/tactical deployments;
- (k) When weapons other than those in the possession of law enforcement are present or alleged to be present;
- (l) Any encounter that becomes adversarial after the initial contact;
- (m) Initial inventory of seized money or high value property;
- (n) Crowd management events;
- (o) Other investigative or enforcement activities where, in the officer's judgment, a video recording would assist in the investigation or prosecution of a crime, or assist in documenting the incident for later investigation or review.

06. Exceptions to Required Activation or Continued Recording.

Exceptions to required activation or continuation of the BWV recording are:

- (a) When, in the officer's judgment, activation, continuing to record, or changing the BWV functions would jeopardize their safety or the safety of the public. However, the officer shall activate or re-activate their BWV as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so unless other exceptional circumstances exist;
- (b) When a witness or victim refuses to provide a statement if recorded by the BWV and the encounter is not confrontational;
- (c) When, in the officer's judgment, a recording would interfere with their ability to conduct an investigation;
- (d) When, in the officer's judgment, a recording would be inappropriate because of the victim or witness's physical condition, emotional state, age, or other sensitive circumstances;
- (e) When recording could risk the safety of a confidential informant, citizen informant, victim, or undercover officer;

- (f) In patient care areas of a hospital, clinic, rape treatment center, or other healthcare facility (including mental health) unless enforcement action is being taken in these areas. If recording is necessary, officers shall make reasonable efforts to avoid recording individuals other than the suspect;
- (g) Once a crime scene is secured and the officer no longer has an investigative role, and where the chance of encountering a suspect is unlikely;
- (h) Prior to or while discussing a case on scene with other officers or during on-scene tactical planning;
- (i) When, in the officer's judgment, privacy concerns outweigh any legitimate law enforcement interest in recording;
- (j) When ordered to stop recording by a supervisor;
- (k) When the recording of a person is in violation of the law.

07. Discretionary Activation.

There are many enforcement or criminal investigation situations where the use of the BWV is appropriate, and this policy is not intended to describe every circumstance in which recording would be appropriate or otherwise further the purpose of body cameras. In addition to the circumstance in which activation is required, officers should activate the camera any time they feel its use would be appropriate and valuable to document an on-duty incident, unless otherwise prohibited by this policy or law.

08. Assignments Temporarily Preventing BWV Use.

It is recognized that officers subject to call out, motorcycle officers, or K9 unit officers may not have access to their BWV equipment prior to responding to a scene, or participating in an enforcement or criminal investigation. In these cases, officers should pick up their camera as soon as practicable.

09. Recording of Entire Event.

Once activated, the BWV shall remain on until the conclusion of the contact or event, unless authorized by a supervisor or otherwise permitted under this Chapter.

10. Documentation of Recordings, Failure to Activate, or Discontinuation of BWV Recordings

Officers shall document, in the appropriate report (e.g., police report, traffic citation, CAD entry), if they have captured an incident, did not capture an incident, and/or if they interrupted the recording for any reason.

If an officer does not activate the BWV prior to initiating an enforcement or investigative contact, fails to record the entire contact, or interrupts the recording for any reason, the officer shall notify their supervisor of the reason(s) in writing.

11. Notice to Members of the Public of BWV Recording.

Officers are not required by law or this Chapter to obtain consent from members of the public when the officer is lawfully in an area where the recording takes place. However, officers may inform individuals they are recording, when feasible to do so, particularly when the advisement may gain compliance or cooperation, or assist in an investigation.

In addition, officers entering into a private space, (e.g., residences, restrooms, locker rooms), must make a reasonable effort to notify the occupants that the BWV is present before entering the area, unless: the officer enters the area pursuant to a warrant; such notice would, in the officer's judgment, jeopardize their safety or the safety of the public; such notice would compromise an investigation or tactics; or if other exigent circumstances exist.

12. Playback of BWV Recording.

Officers are not required to play back BWV recordings to allow members of the public to review the video footage in the field.

13. Prohibited BWV Recording.

The activation or use of the BWV is prohibited, unless otherwise authorized by this Chapter, during:

- (a) Department briefings, meetings, roll calls or while in private Department spaces such as locker rooms, break rooms or restrooms;
- (b) Non-work related activities or other activities not related to enforcement contact nor criminal investigation;
- (c) Private conversations with any other member of the Department without the written consent of all involved parties;
- (d) Department administrative investigations;
- (e) Homicide or other major crime briefings, or during a homicide walk-through;
- (f) Contact with confidential informants;
- (g) Depositions, court proceedings, pre-trial conferences, or any other judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings (e.g., administrative hearings such as Department of Motor Vehicle hearings);
- (h) While in a facility whose primary purpose is to provide psychiatric or medical services unless responding to a call for service involving a suspect or taking a suspect, victim, or witness statement;
- (i) While inside jail facilities;
- (j) Any area where audio or video recording is prohibited by law.

Nothing in this section is intended to interfere with an officer's ability to openly record an interrogation pursuant to California Govt. Code §3303(g), or to preclude activating the BWV when confronting a violent or assaultive suspect or other circumstance where a reasonable use of force may be anticipated.

14. Training.

Officers who are assigned the BWV must complete Department approved training in BWV policies, proper use, and maintenance of the device before using the system in the field. Supervisors must complete Department approved training in the supervision and management of the BWV system.

Supplemental training will be conducted when deficiencies are identified in policy compliance, use, maintenance, or supervision and management of the BWV system. Additional appropriate training will also be conducted should there be changes in policy, hardware, or software that affects the use, maintenance, supervision or management of the system.

15. Inspection and Testing of Equipment.

Officers shall be responsible for inspecting and testing their BWV equipment at the start of their shift and shall ensure that the equipment is properly functioning. Officers shall notify their supervisor, in writing, if the BWV equipment is not properly functioning. For purposes of this Chapter "in writing" shall include e-mail.

16. Assigned BWV Equipment.

No officer shall use BWV equipment not assigned to them, unless authorized by a supervisor.

17. Damaged, Malfunctioning or Inoperable Equipment

The BWV equipment is the responsibility of the assigned officer and must be used with reasonable care to ensure proper functioning and reliability. If an officer's BWV malfunctions or is damaged or inoperable, the officer shall

notify the on-duty supervisor. Campuses shall develop and implement local policies on notification and documentation of such notification.

If feasible, the supervisor shall provide the officer with a functional BWV prior to the officer deploying to the field. However, the lack of a BWV unit shall not prevent an officer from working their shift or assignment.

An officer shall not be held financially responsible for damaged, malfunctioning or inoperable equipment unless abuse of the equipment by the officer is found to be the cause.

18. Labeling, Categorizing and Uploading Recordings.

Officers shall label, categorize and upload their BWV recordings into the BWV data storage system in accordance with UCPD procedure(s).

19. Viewing Recordings by Recording Officer.

Subject to the exceptions in this Chapter, officers should review BWV recordings on their assigned device or authorized computer prior to documenting an incident, arrest, search, interview, use of force, or other enforcement or investigative activity to assist with reports, statements, and documentation that are accurate and complete. Officers must not use the fact that a recording was made to avoid preparing an accurate, detailed, and complete report.

20. Modification, Alteration, or Deletion.

No employee shall modify, alter, or delete video or audio once recorded by the BWV camera, except as authorized by Department policy.

21. Request for Deletion of Accidental Recording.

In the event of an accidental activation of the BWV where the resulting recording is of no potential investigative or evidentiary value, the recording officer may request that the BWV file be deleted by submitting a request in writing to the Chief of Police or designee who shall review the recording, and if approved, send the request to the system administrator for deletion.

22. Restriction of Personal or Sensitive Information.

In the event of a BWV recording that captures sensitive or personal information for which access should be restricted (“restricted recording”), an officer may submit a request in writing to the Chief of Police or designee to restrict access to that portion of the recording. The Chief of Police or designee will determine what, if any, portion of the recording shall be restricted. The system manager will then restrict access to only that portion of the recording that is approved. The remainder of the recording will be maintained consistent with existing policy.

22.1 Access to Restricted Recording by Auditor or Investigator.

The Chief of Police or designee may allow an investigator or auditor to view a recording that has been restricted pursuant to Section 22 if the request is necessary in order to conduct an authorized criminal investigation, administrative investigation, or a Department inspection or audit.

- (a) **Notification Prior to Access of Restricted Recording.** Prior to granting access, the Chief of Police or designee must notify the officer who originally requested that the recording be restricted. If the original officer objects to the review, they shall immediately notify the Chief of Police or designee of the objection in writing within seven calendar days of receiving notification. Absent exigent circumstances, the restricted portion of the recording shall not be disclosed or reviewed by others until the Chief of Police or designee has made a determination regarding the objection and disclosure.

Once a final determination has been made, the original requesting officer will be notified in writing within 48 hours, and prior to release of the restricted information.

- (b) **Exception to Notification Requirement for Restricted Recording.** When notification of a request to review a restricted recording would compromise an ongoing administrative or criminal investigation, the notification requirement in Section 22.1(a) shall not apply if approved by the Chief of Police or designee.

22.2 Access to Restricted Recording by Law Enforcement or by Legal Obligation.

If a restricted recording is requested by another law enforcement agency, or the Department is required to produce it by law, the officer who originally requested the information be restricted will be notified, absent exigent circumstances, of the request or legal requirement, within 48 hours, in writing.

23. Unauthorized Access to Recordings Prohibited.

Although the data captured by the BWV is not considered Criminal Offender Record Information (“CORI”), it shall be treated as such and in accordance with Department policy regarding access to CORI. All access to the system must be logged and is subject to audit at any time. Accessing, viewing, copying, or releasing BWV data, including recordings, for non-law enforcement purposes not otherwise authorized by this Chapter is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Access to BWV data shall only be from Department authorized computers, Department work stations or the BWV cameras. However, administrative users of the BWV data or evidence management system may access the data from a Department authorized device outside of the Department for the purpose of completing administrative tasks, such as locking or unlocking users.

24. Copying of BWV Recording or Data

Personnel shall not make copies of any BWV recording for personal use or to share with unauthorized individuals or entities. Only department authorized devices shall be used to copy, view, share, or otherwise distribute BWV recordings. Digital evidence captured by BWC are investigative records and shall be handled pursuant to existing Department policies and procedures.

25. Review of BWV Recordings by Departmental Employees.

Access to BWV data shall be limited as follows, unless otherwise provided for in this Chapter:

- (a) Officers may view their own BWV data for official Department business;
- (b) Any employee may review BWV data as it relates to:
 - (1) Their involvement in an incident for purposes of completing a criminal investigation and/or preparing official reports;
 - (2) Prior to courtroom testimony, courtroom presentation, or testimony at a quasi-judicial administrative hearing;
 - (3) Providing a statement in an administrative investigation.
 - (4) Providing a statement in a criminal investigation, including officer-involved shooting investigations and other uses of force;
 - (5) This section does not apply to sworn personnel providing a public safety statement following a critical incident.
- (c) When exigent circumstances exist, such as identifying a suspect or other pertinent information in the event of an injured officer;
- (d) Supervisors and/or investigators who are investigating an allegation of misconduct, may view the recording in order to assist in the investigation. For citizen complaints, a supervisor may independently review applicable video. For internally generated allegations of misconduct, a

supervisor shall receive authorization from the Chief of Police or designee to review any applicable video;

- (e) Command staff may randomly review BWV recordings for the purposes of validity testing, including the review of one recording per officer per month. Any BWV system deficiencies identified will be documented and remedied. The method of random selection will be agreed upon between the Federated University Police Officers Association (FUPOA) and the UC Council of Chiefs. Any performance issues will be discussed with the officer and training provided. Any criminal activity will be investigated;
- (f) To allow for necessary administrative functions such as BWV data management, system maintenance and repair, and evidence management;
- (g) Command staff, supervisors, and authorized Department personnel may conduct random periodic inspections and reviews to determine whether Department personnel are accessing BWV recordings and data for legitimate and authorized purposes;
- (h) Supervisors may review BWV recordings, but not in violation of 27, as follows:
 - (1) When necessary as part of the report approval process.
 - (2) To ensure that the video and audio was properly captured, uploaded/downloaded;
 - (3) To ensure that the video and audio was categorized appropriately for evidentiary or retention purposes;
 - (4) To conduct roll call training on expectations, use and maintenance of BWV equipment. Any use of BWV recordings for training must comply with Section 27 of this Chapter;
 - (5) To debrief BWV-captured incidents of value after obtaining authorization from the Chief of Police or designee
 - (6) In order to resolve citizen complaints pursuant to 25(d).

26. Use of Recordings for Training.

A BWV recording may be used for training, as long as the recording will not be used for disciplinary purposes. Any person recommending a particular recording shall submit the recommendation through the chain of command.

The Chief of Police or designee must notify the recording officer and any depicted officer of the intent to use the recording for training. If any such officer objects to the review, they shall immediately notify the Chief of Police or designee of the objection orally or in writing. The Chief of Police or designee shall determine whether an officer's objection outweighs the training value.

27. Restriction on Use for Monitoring for Violations of Policy/Law.

It shall be a violation of this policy for supervisors to review recordings for the sole purpose of looking for violations of Department policy or law not related to a specific complaint or incident. This section is not intended to restrict Command staff from performing monthly viewings of an officer's recordings pursuant to Section 25(e) of this Chapter.

28. Use of Deadly Force – Handling of Recording.

For any use of force reasonably anticipated and intended to create a substantial likelihood of causing death or very serious injury, the following shall apply:

- (a) The supervisor of the involved officer(s) must take possession of their BWV equipment as soon as possible, ensuring that recording has stopped and that the power is off, and maintain custody until the BWV is transferred to the assigned investigator;
- (b) The Chief of Police or designee will assign an investigator, and the assigned investigator shall take possession of the BWV camera, and perform the upload process, if necessary;
- (c) In order to protect the integrity of the video and to ensure that the video is properly uploaded, the officer(s) involved shall not be allowed to review the BWV recording prior to turning over the BWV equipment to the supervisor.

- (d) The involved officer shall be permitted to view the BWV video of the incident once the video has been uploaded to the server. If the officer chooses not to view the video prior to giving an initial statement, the officer will have an opportunity to review the recording(s) after the initial statement has been taken and provide a supplemental statement if desired.
- (e) Prior to viewing the BWV, the officer must read and sign the Video/Audio Evidence Review Acknowledgment (Attachment A);
- (f) The fact that the officer was given the opportunity to review the BWV should be documented, as well as the time, date and location of any such viewing;
- (g) Supervisors shall not view the BWV recording without express permission from the Chief of Police or designee;
- (h) Use of the BWV will be properly documented in the appropriate report(s), and the recording booked into evidence;
- (i) Supervisors shall ensure that BWV information is compiled for department review boards and/or administrative review reports (e.g., pursuit review, use of force review, etc.), when applicable.

29. Other Use of Force– Handling of Recording.

For any use of force not covered by Section 28, the following shall apply:

- (a) Supervisors shall allow involved officer(s) to review their own BWV recordings;
- (b) Supervisors shall allow involved officer(s) to review other BWV recordings, if deemed necessary to assist with complete and accurate reports and documentation of the incident;
- (c) Prior to viewing the BWV, the involved officer(s) must read and sign the Video/Audio Evidence Review Acknowledgment (Attachment A);
- (d) Use of the BWV will be properly documented in the appropriate report(s), and the recording booked into evidence;
- (e) Supervisors shall ensure that BWV information is compiled for department review boards and/or administrative review reports (e.g., pursuit review, use of force review, etc.), when applicable.

30. Retention.

Digital evidence captured by BWC shall be treated as an investigative record and handled pursuant to existing Department retention policies and procedures.

31. Technical Specifications and System Security.

The University of California Systemwide Coordinator of Police Services shall, in consultation with the Council of Police Chiefs, develop minimum technical standards and specifications and system functionalities for BWV systems. In addition, the security of the BWV data must be in compliance with University policy and within the Criminal Justice Information Services guidelines.

**UC Merced Police Department
Body Worn Audio/Video Systems
Interim Policy**

ATTACHMENT A

Video/Audio Evidence Review Acknowledgment

In this case, there is video evidence that you will have an opportunity to view after you have given a public safety statement (if applicable). Video evidence has limitations and may depict the events differently than you recall, and may not depict any or all of the events as seen or heard by you. Video has a limited field of view and may not capture events normally seen by the human eye. The “frame rate” of video may limit the camera’s ability to capture movements normally seen by the human eye. Videos are a two-dimensional medium and may not capture depth, distance or positional orientation as well as the human eye. Remember, the video evidence is intended to assist your memory and ensure that your initial statement explains your state of mind at the time of the incident. You should not feel in any way compelled or obligated to explain any difference in what you remember and acted upon from what viewing the additional evidence provides you. If listening to audio recordings or viewing video recordings provides additional clarity to what you remember that is fine; if it does not, that is fine also.

Read and Acknowledged:

Signature

Date and Time

Printed Name

Badge No.

Witnessed:

Signature

Date and Time

Printed Name

Title/Position