

By providing a video record of law enforcement activities, officials reported that BWCs make operations more transparent to the public and help to resolve questions following an encounter between officers and members of the public. They help agencies evaluate and improve officer performance and enable agencies to identify and correct any training, policy, or process deficiencies.

2) Reducing complaints and resolving officer-involved incidents

Officials reported a noticeable drop in complaints after deploying BWCs. One explanation provided is that the mere presence of a camera can lead to more civil interactions between officers and the public, and that the act of being recorded tends to elevate behavior on both sides of the camera. Many agencies reported that having video footage of an encounter discourages people from filing spurious or unfounded complaints against officers saving significant time and money spent on lengthy investigations and lawsuits. Video can also demonstrate that officers provide constitutional policing on a regular basis and verify they are maintaining professionalism in correctional and patrol settings.

3) Identifying and addressing operational training or performance issues

Officials reported using video footage to provide scenario-based training, to evaluate the performance of new officers in the field, and to identify emerging areas where training or policy revision is needed to maintain or elevate performance on tactics, communication, and customer service.

4) Evidence collection and documentation

Officials reported that BWCs significantly improve evidence for civil and criminal court proceedings and can aid in internal investigations. In addition to documenting encounters with the public, video footage provides a record of interrogations and arrests, along with other aspects that are witnessed by the officer on scene. Prosecutors participating in the forum reported that video evidence is particularly helpful in providing evidence in domestic violence cases that can be difficult to prosecute when evidence is insufficient for trial. Footage can show first-hand the victim's injuries, demeanor, and occasionally the assault itself. When suspects are shown video footage, they often plead guilty without going to trial. While video footage is frequently captured by bystanders, it often fails to capture necessary details, the events leading up to an incident, or footage from the vantage point of the officer.

Considerations Prior to Program Implementation

The evidentiary value of video footage and the benefits associated with BWCs on agency transparency and accountability can be significant. However, there are several critical policy issues that must be thoroughly considered.

1. Privacy considerations and determining when to record

New technologies, particularly body-worn cameras, have significant implications for public privacy rights, particularly in situations involving victim interviews or in other sensitive situations. BWCs provide the ability to record inside private homes and to capture sensitive situations that might occur during calls for service that could be subject to disclosure. Agencies must factor privacy considerations into decisions about when to record, how long to store data, how to respond to public requests for video footage, and whether recording should be discretionary or even prohibited in certain situations.

2. Data storage, retention, access, and disclosure

Decisions about when and for how long to store video, access to footage, and disclosure timelines are critical. Privacy concerns can be largely addressed through these policies, but many factors must be considered and balanced such as state law, transparency objectives, evidentiary chain of custody requirements, data storage capacity and associated costs.

3. Financial considerations

While BWCs can provide many benefits, they also require considerable financial investment. In addition to acquisition costs, well-designed programs require staff resources to review, categorize and manage videos, prepare copies of the video for the public or for court proceedings, provide training to officers, and administer the program. Equipment pricing varies based on functionality, storage capacity and battery life. Data storage, often the most expensive aspect of program, is directly impacted by policies determining when videos are required, how long videos are kept, and how videos are stored.

A review of best practices suggests that jurisdictions considering a BWC program should develop comprehensive policy, funding and implementation plans, and engage a broad group of criminal justice stakeholders to consider and address the following:

- Video Capture and Use
- Public Release of Video
- Retention and Storage Requirements
- Training Requirements
- Audits/Internal Controls
- Preparation and Use of Video Evidence in Court

BWC Program Evaluation and Stakeholder Outreach

In 2019, the Placer County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) created an internal working group to research alternatives and develop preliminary agency policy for the program. The working group included the Administrative Captain, Patrol Lieutenant, Jail Lieutenant, Tahoe Lieutenant, Professional Standards Unit Detective, Fiscal Supervisor, Evidence Technician, IT Analyst, and a

representative from the Deputy Sheriff's Association. The committee conducted a thorough review of four BWC vendors: Axon (formerly Taser), Watchguard, Coban, and LensLock. These vendors were selected because they offer accompanying in-car camera systems that can be integrated with the BWC system, and because they bring the greatest experience in the industry. Integration of in-car and body-worn camera technology is optimal to eliminate redundancies in training and support costs associated with disparate systems.

On September 2, 2020, the Placer County Criminal Justice Policy Committee (Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, Probation, Health and Human Services, Superior Court, Board of Supervisors, County Executive Office, and Public Defender's Office) received a presentation from the Sheriff's Office on the proposed BWC program. The Committee members identified numerous benefits of a BWC program to the broader criminal justice system including more timely fact finding, investigations, case resolution, and supported implementation of a County BWC program based upon the presentation from the Sheriff's Office.

At this time, some of our municipal law enforcement agencies within the County have already implemented, although limited, a BWC program. These include the cities of Rocklin, Auburn and Lincoln. The City of Roseville does not currently have a BWC program nor an in-car camera program. To date, the City of Lincoln is the only jurisdiction utilizing the same system as is being considered by PCSO. The District Attorney is conducting initial conversations regarding the potential for a regionally coordinated BWC program with Placer County Law Enforcement (PLEA) and will report on the outcome of those discussions in the near future.

Operational and Capital Budgetary Impact Assessment

When fully implemented, the BWC program would consist of 260 cameras issued to all deputies and executive staff, and 130 cameras for use in the Sheriff's Correctional Division. Leasing, rather than purchasing, is being explored as a cost-effective and more predictable approach to financing this technology-based solution. Preliminary costs for the BWC program have been developed with these assumptions and are projected for a three-year, phased implementation.

To ensure proper management of video evidence, technical support for hardware and software, and training, PCSO would be requesting the addition of three full-time positions as follows:

- Information Technology Analyst II - \$161,000/year
- Evidence Technician II - \$99,000/year
- PSU Detective (Deputy Sheriff II) - \$210,000/year
 - \$45,000 in start-up costs for equipment and supplies

The District Attorney's Office has also assessed the additional workload to review and prepare video for court appearances and would be requesting two full-time positions.

- Investigative Assistant - \$114,000/year
- Investigative Assistant - \$114,000/year

Other associated costs for the BWC program have also been evaluated, such as training, hardware and software installation, warranties, cloud-based storage, CAD integration and supportive professional services. All anticipated costs are summarized below:

Estimated Cost Summary Tables

BWC Program Cost Proposal	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	3-Year Total
Watchguard Cameras - Patrol	\$ 330,000	\$ 360,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 1,090,000
Watchguard Cameras - Corrections	\$ 120,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 480,000
Staffing for SO	\$ 515,000	\$ 483,000	\$ 502,000	\$ 1,500,000
Staffing for DA	\$ 228,000	\$ 236,000	\$ 244,000	\$ 708,000
Project Total	\$ 1,193,000	\$ 1,239,000	\$ 1,346,000	\$ 3,778,000

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated three-year operating costs for implementing a BWC program are anticipated as follows: Year one is \$1,193,000, Year 2 is \$1,239,000, and Year 3 is \$1,346,000 for a 3-Year total of \$3,778,000. Should the Board direct proceeding, staff recommends next steps to include conducting a technical review with Information Technology, Human Resources, and Procurement; development of policies and procedures in collaboration with members of the Criminal Justice Policy Committee, PPEO and DSA; and returning to your Board with a recommended funding and implementation plan.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - BWC Statement - Morgan Gire, Placer County District Attorney
- Attachment 2 - BWC Statement - Dan Koukol, Placer County Public Defender's Office



MORGAN GIRE
District Attorney

PLACER COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

10810 Justice Center Drive, Suite 240 • Roseville, CA 95678-6231

916-543-8000 • FAX 916 543-2550

www.placer.ca.gov

Statement on Body Worn Cameras

The Placer County District Attorney's Office is in strong support of the Placer County Sheriff's Office Body Worn and Integrated In-Car Camera Project.

Body Worn Camera systems (BWCs) utilized by front-line law enforcement offer many significant benefits. BWCs increase police transparency, accountability, and credibility. They reduce unwarranted or erroneous complaints against law enforcement, increase officer and citizen safety, strengthen trust between law enforcement and the community, facilitate and improve officer training, and greatly assist in the determination and prosecution of cases. These benefits ultimately result in an increase in officer safety, public safety, and trust in both law enforcement and the entire criminal justice system.

From the District Attorney's perspective, BWCs are critical. The District Attorney's Office is responsible for evaluating evidence, including police reports, witness statements, and photos and video evidence to determine whether to file formal criminal charges. This process of criminal case review is truly a search for truth. Footage from Body Worn Camera systems can better inform this process. From the investigatory stage to the decision to file or not file criminal charges, BWC footage provides clarity and corroboration. In the assessment of the feasibility and strengths of a case and during the negotiations of resolutions and settlements, BWC footage provides background, accuracy, and context. In the ultimate presentation to a jury, BWC footage provides perspective and authenticity.

The costs associated with the implementation of a Body Worn Camera System are significant and will necessarily extend to the District Attorney's Office. The volume of footage that must be received, reviewed, stored, and discovered will require additional personnel and resources. However, it is anticipated that many of those costs will be greatly offset by the reduction in litigation. Cases should resolve sooner, liability will be reduced, and factfinders will be equipped with more evidence upon which to make a reasoned decision.

While a uniform county-wide implementation of a Body Worn Camera system might streamline some of the logistical issues for the District Attorney's Office (e.g., receipt and storage of camera footage), the challenges associated with this unified approach may prove too cumbersome and cause significant delays. The District Attorney's Office remains committed to working with and accommodating all agencies in the implementation of their Body Worn Camera systems.

Quite simply, there is an expectation by the members of our community who ultimately serve as our jurors that all encounters with law enforcement are recorded. BWC systems will meet that expectation, and will improve efficiency, accountability, and trust. The District Attorney's Office is committed to assisting in the implementation of this system.

Statement on Body-Worn Camera Program
Placer County Public Defender's Office

The Placer County Public Defender's Office is in strong support of the Placer County Sheriff's Office Body Worn Project. Our office anticipates that the widespread use of body cameras by the Sheriff's Department will reduce factual disputes and therefore reduce litigation.

Simply stated, by reducing factual disputes, the result is a reduction in cases going to trial. Body camera media will provide an accurate record of physical behavior and statements made during law enforcement contact. This will be particularly helpful in cases involving:

1. Resisting arrest
2. Driving under the influence
3. Search and seizure issues
4. Domestic violence cases

Body-worn cameras will also provide recorded witness statements which will also be useful for our office.

These benefits have the potential to increase efficiencies in our office and to enhance our case proceedings. The additional time required to view and transcribe body camera footage will be offset by the anticipated decrease in litigation. The increased costs our office anticipates will be for storage requirements and are estimated at \$5,000 per year.

Dan Koukol, Placer County Public Defender's Office

