



Athens-Clarke County
Police Department
Directive 3.05



Body-Worn Cameras

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3.05.01 POLICY AND PURPOSE

[CLE 41.3.8a]

It will be the policy of the Athens-Clarke County Police Department (hereinafter referred to as "ACCPD" or "Department") to equip its sworn officers with body-worn cameras and that officers will use body-worn cameras to record their interactions with the public. It will further be the policy of the ACCPD to properly store and maintain body-worn camera video recording in compliance with applicable record retention laws.

It is the philosophy of ACCPD that a proper body-worn camera program is a benefit to the Department and the community because it accomplishes the objectives of enhancing officer safety; accurately capturing events involving police-citizen contacts; memorializing events, action, and statements for internal reporting and courtroom preparation and presentation; impartially measuring performance for self-critique, evaluation, and training; and capturing information to use in current and future investigations.

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with procedures and guidelines for the use of body-worn cameras, as well as the management, storage, and retrieval of audio/video recorded by such body-worn cameras.

DEFINITIONS

Body-Worn Camera (BWC): a video recording system designed to be worn on the body of the officer

3.05.03 GENERAL PROCEDURES

A. All officers/supervisors who are assigned a BWC will complete a BWC familiarization/training session as deemed appropriate by the Career Development and Training Unit prior to BWC use in field operations. Training will include operating policies, appropriate care and maintenance, proper labeling of videos, and any other elements deemed necessary for the effective use of BWCs.

[CLE 41.3.8 f]

B. User Responsibilities

[CLE 41.3.8 b]

1. Officers will operate all BWC equipment according to the manufacturer's guidelines, departmental policy, and training.
2. Officers assigned a BWC are required to wear Wearable Video Recorder, (WVR), during normal tours of duty, as well as all off-duty assignments or extra-duty jobs when acting in their official capacity.
3. Officers will wear their BWC in a manner as to allow for quality recordings at all times. To such an end, officers assigned a BWC with head-mount capable cameras will wear such cameras on/adjacent to their head at all times. Likewise, officers assigned a single-unit BWC will wear such camera on the chest or torso in a manner that does not obstruct the clear view of the BWC.
4. When operating in the field, officers will keep their BWC on and maintained in the "buffering" or standby mode indicated by a blinking green light until activated for an event.
5. Officers will activate their BWC for all incidents involving citizen contact on calls for service or officer-initiated activity. When practical, the officer should activate a BWC recording of an event immediately upon observing cause to initiate a traffic stop, other citizen contact, or just prior to arriving on the scene

of a call. Officers are not required to inform persons they are being recorded by BWCs.

6. When the BWC is activated to document an event, it will not be deactivated until the event has been concluded unless a situation occurs where stopping the BWC is reasonable, or as otherwise required by law. However, officers may deactivate the audio during an event only when discussing procedural or other investigative matters with another officer. Any deactivation (intentional or unintentional) of BWC video recording prior to the conclusion of an event will be documented in an incident report, along with the reason for deactivation.
7. Upon completion of the traffic stop, citizen contact, or call for service officers will end the BWC recording and will properly label the recording with the appropriate Event ID>Title/Categories.
8. As appropriate to ensure accuracy and consistency of accounts for written reports, officers may review recording using the “Playback” function on the BWC or through the Flex Camera smart phone applications. A MDT that is not connected to a “hardline fiber connection” at a workstation is not to be used for such review for that may negatively affect connectivity of all MDT users.
9. With the exception of police radios, officers will ensure that the volume from other electronic devices within the police vehicle does not interfere with BWC recordings.
10. Officers will dock their BWC for download at an appropriate docking station at the end of each tour of duty.
11. Officers will not erase, alter, reuse, modify, or tamper with any BWC recording or storage device.
12. Personally-owned BWCs will not be permitted for departmental use, except in instances approved in writing by the Chief of Police and/or the Deputy Chief of Police. In such instances, the data is the property of the Athens-Clarke County Police Department and will be managed in the same mode as all other BWC data, inclusive of State of Georgia records retention requirements.
13. Officers will immediately report any malfunctions, damage, loss, or theft of BWC equipment to the appropriate supervisor.
14. Officers will notify a supervisor when the BWC has captured any incident in which they believe a pending citizen complaint is likely or any other significant event that would require supervisory notification.

15. All prisoner transports will be recorded on BWC with both audio recording and video recording features activated.

C. Supervisory Responsibilities

[CLE 41.3.8 g]

1. Supervisors will ensure that officers within their chains of command are properly trained on the use of BWCs and are familiar with this directive regulating BWC procedures.
2. Supervisors will conduct periodic inspections, at least once per quarter, of BWC equipment assigned to officers in their chains of command and report any damage, loss, or malfunctions to the appropriate authority.
3. Supervisors will conduct periodic reviews, at least once per month of BWC videos for officers within their chains of command to assess officers' performance and ensure compliance with this directive, as well as other police directives. Reviews should be of multiple videos selected at random to include a variety of call types.
4. Supervisors will properly counsel/coach officers on any training/performance issues and/or appropriately investigate and report any policy violations or misuse of equipment identified through periodic BWC reviews (see Directive 2.31 – Complaints and Disciplinary Action). For any recordings associated with training/performance issues or policy violations, the supervisor will flag the recording for review.
5. All BWC inspections, reviews, and actions taken will be documented by the supervisor.
6. If a complaint is associated with a recorded event or an officer believes an incident may generate a complaint, the supervisor will flag the audio/video recording for review. This process should result in the recording assignment to a Pending Review category.

D. Media Duplication/Reviews

[CLE 41.3.8c]

1. All BWC recordings are the property of the Department. Any dissemination of recordings will be in compliance with the Department's open records policy (see Directive 1.14 – Inspection of Public Record), as well as other applicable law. Officers will direct open records requests for BWC recordings to the Open Records Department.
2. Where appropriate as part of their official duties and limited to only the specific purpose, officers may copy/disseminate BWC recordings for the following purposes:

- a. To generate a criminal BOLO for internal or public release pursuant to applicable policy;
- b. As part of conducting a criminal investigation and compiling a case file or to provide to a criminal prosecutor as part of a criminal prosecution;
- c. As part of conducting an Administrative Investigation or Unit-Level Inquiry and compiling an administrative case file;
- d. As part of the supervisory review/inspection process; or
- e. As part of a public media release approved by the Chief of Police or designee.

3. For incidents including officer-involved shootings, Administrative Investigations, or Unit-Level Inquiries where officers may be asked or required to make a statement, officers will only be permitted to review BWC recordings at the discretion of the investigating supervisor or the Office of Professional Standards Investigator. All employees are prohibited from accessing/viewing BWC video of other officers unless there is a legitimate police purpose. Criminal Investigations or Professional Standards will restrict access to BWC videos of officer-involved shootings and other high-profile incidents.
4. BWC video may be used for internal training purposes but will only upon approval by the Chief of Police or designee.

3.05.04 CLASSIFICATION, RETENTION, AND DOCUMENTATION [CLE 41.3.8d]

- A. Officers will document in the narrative of the incident report the fact that an incident was recorded on BWC for every incident that results in a written report.
- B. Officers will label all BWC videos with the appropriate ID, Title, and Categories. The following is the appropriate label for each:
 1. ID: the associated case reference number or incident number
 2. Title: the name, description, or vehicle of the primary subject involved
 3. Category: select any and all from the list that apply
- C. Data from BWCS will be stored through use of approved, vendor-provided storage solutions as with AXON's Evidence.com
- D. Recordings will be retained under the following schedule, but at a minimum will not be retained less than the period specified by the State of Georgia Archives' Local Government Records Retention Schedule:
 1. Traffic Stop / Field Contact: 180 days;
 2. Traffic Accident: 913 days;

3. Arrest: 913 days;
4. Vehicle Foot Pursuit (Non-apprehension): 913 days
5. Emergency Response: 180 days;
6. Incident: 913 days;
7. Officer Involved / Related Accident / Officer Injury: Permanent;
8. Fatality or Death Involved: Permanent;
9. Driving Under the Influence: 913 days;
10. Pending Review: 913 days;
11. Transport – Non Event: 913 days; and
12. Uncategorized: 180 days

E. Recordings that meet the requirements for permanent retention will be copied to a DVD or other external storage device and placed into evidence for long term storage by a Records Technician.

F. Recordings developed from BWCs are public records. And as such are public records, and as such are subject to the Georgia Open Records Act. Requests for recordings will be directed to the Athens-Clarke County Police Department Records Unit and addressed to the Open Records Department. The release or exemption from release of all BWC video will be according to Directive 1.14 (Inspection of Public Record) and applicable law related to open records.

3.05.05 EQUIPMENT INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE**[CLE 41.3.8 e]**

- A.** At the beginning of each shift, officers will include the BWC system in the inspection personally assigned equipment. Officers will report to a direct supervisor any observed equipment issues, malfunctions, or damage and acquire the necessary items to ensure proper BWC operation over his/her assigned shift, inclusive of acquiring another BWC through his/her chain of command, if necessary.
- B.** Officers will report and explain any BWC malfunction to a direct supervisor. Officers will not attempt to fix or repair a damaged or malfunctioning BWC. BWCs will only be repaired by the BWC's manufacturer.
- C.** BWCs that become defective will be turned over to the Career Development and Training Unit and immediately removed from service. They will be returned to the manufacturer for repairs prior to reissuance to another officer.
- D.** If a BWC must be replaced, the officer will report to his/her direct supervisor for an exchange.

3.05.06 PROGRAM AND POLICY REVIEW

The ACCPD's Command staff may direct a review of the BWC program as it deems prudent. To such an end, a review of the program's operation and its guiding policies at least once during the department's accreditation review process is advisable.

By Authority of:

**Cleveland L. Spruill, Sr.
Chief of Police**