




CITY OF KNOXVILLE
MAYOR MADELINE ROGERO

KNOXVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



CHIEF EVE THOMAS

To: Mayor Rogero
City of Knoxville

From: Chief Eve M. Thomas 
Knoxville Police Department

Date: December 17, 2019

Re: Body-Worn Camera Implementation Proposal

Body-worn cameras have the ability to give police personnel and the public an additional tool to understand the dynamics and situations that officers find themselves encountering each day as they go about answering calls for service and providing public safety.

These cameras are generally attached to an officer's clothing and allow for audio and video recording wherever the officer is. There are numerous variable characteristics of body-worn cameras to be considered when contemplating them as another piece of police equipment. These include, but are not limited to, camera size, weight, placement on the officer, quality of video, field of view, whether they employ night-vision capability, battery life, charge time, formatting, storage, playback capability, pre-event recording, and whether there is a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) interface, among many other options and considerations.

The Knoxville Police Department implemented what is known as in-car audio/video recording beginning in 1998 on a limited basis, followed by camera systems being installed in marked vehicles used for patrol functions department wide. Several times in the following years, the option of the addition of body-worn cameras was considered by the department. Unfortunately, in addition to cost, privacy, open records and policy and procedure issues all presented roadblocks to implementation. However, in the last few years the technology and legislative regulations have improved and the cost has come down somewhat. Additionally, with officers and the community requesting the addition of body-worn cameras, and the City Council requesting that we look into the option and costs associated, we have once again explored the costs, benefits and legislative/open records issues.

For the past several months, we have been exploring other in-car camera options since the technology associated with our current system is antiquated and difficult to use-as well as expensive and inefficient in the storage and retrieval of data. We are hopeful that we will have an RFP out for a replacement in-car video system in the next 30 days. As we have looked at in-car camera system vendors, we also inquired about an associated body-worn option and began to look to those companies for demonstrations as to how their products performed. We are fortunate that one of these companies has allowed us to test their units in two of our patrol units.

I have a very short clip demonstrating that technology in an actual call for service answered by one of our officers who is currently testing both the in-car and body-worn options.

The remainder of this report will focus solely on body-worn cameras.

Administratively, prior to testing of body-worn cameras, we had to focus on the following:

- Policy and procedure – we had to create a policy to address procedurally how officers would use the body cameras, for example, when to turn them on and off. That policy was researched – especially among other CALEA accredited agencies who currently employ body-worn cameras and enacted in the form of an Administrative Memorandum (Attachment A) that will be added to our General Orders should we move forward with the purchase of the cameras. We also had to consider how and when the video will be retrieved and made available to officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys and the general public. We are following Tennessee laws in what parts of the video/audio will need to be redacted prior to release to the public – this includes children within a school, the interior of a residence that is not a crime scene, the interior of medical or mental health facilities, etc. (Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-504(u)).
- Functionality – how the cameras will actually work, including how they behave mechanically/electronically, when they are turned on and off, how long they will hold a charge, how they are charged, how the data is downloaded and retrieved for review, etc. Other considerations include how the data can be redacted for dissemination and the storage of that data.
- Training on use by officers and the Technical Services personnel who will be responsible for the storage, retrieval and dissemination of the data as well as the installation of peripherals (charging apparatus, programs for the labeling of video clips, etc.)

We also need to be sure to recognize and communicate the expectations and challenges presented by this technology. The following need to be acknowledged:

- What is viewed by the camera, may not be what the officer is actually seeing. For example, the officer's body may be facing one direction while he is looking to his left or right, and thus the officer is not seeing what the camera is pointed at.
- The resolution of the camera is certain to be better than that of the human eye, so images seen on video will be sharper and clearer than what the officer is seeing.
- Cameras have auto-adjusting low light, sunlight and night vision, where humans do not, so images seen on the camera when it is dark, may not be able to be seen by the officer wearing the camera.
- Viewers of images captured by body-worn cameras have the ability to stop, pause, rewind and replay in slow motion-officers do not.

Potential benefits of the use of body worn cameras include:

- Better transparency as the additional camera improves the ability to provide another view of officer-citizen contacts.
- More efficient resolution of citizen complaints and lawsuits. Again, an additional camera will provide more information.

- Evidence that can be used in criminal arrests and prosecution. Studies have found that “the use of body-worn cameras led to increases in arrests, prosecutions and guilty pleas.” (Chapman, p.2)
- Training opportunities with the additional audio/video of real life situations.

A recent study completed with NIJ support done at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, “found that officers with body-worn cameras generated fewer use-of-force reports and complaints from citizens compared to officers without body-worn cameras. Additionally, officers with body-worn cameras issued higher numbers of arrests and citations compared to officers without body-worn cameras.” (Chapman, p.2)

It is important to note that in 2018, officers of the Knoxville Police Department used force, or responded to resistance a total of 171 times, which included five K9 uses. When this number is compared to the 11,078 arrests effected in 2018, force was only used in 1.5% of all arrests. If we expand these same 171 instances of force used to include arrests and the 108,144 citations and 5,140 field interviews recorded that year, that percentage of force used in documented citizen encounters shrinks to .14%!

Finally, the estimated cost to implement a body worn camera program in the Knoxville Police Department using the vendor and equipment we are currently testing would be approximately **\$4,246,546 over a five-year contract period**. This would ensure that all officers who currently have an in-car camera and/or respond to calls for service and perform patrol functions will be issued a body-worn camera.

The initial first year cost to implement a body-worn camera program would be the most expensive as it requires the purchase and installation of equipment and the hiring of an additional Audio Video Technician to fill the data requests, storage and maintenance issues that will be doubling as we double our data and devices. The **first year cost would be \$1,745,920** and includes the following items and costs for each:

- An additional Audio Video Technician at an entry level salary of \$48,162/year including benefits.
- 400 body cameras, data storage, magnetic mounts and “evidence.com” software at a cost of \$499 each for a total of \$199,600.
- Power docks, mounts, cables and batteries at a cost of \$150,000.
- A digital management application employing unlimited data storage license agreement at \$1,068.00 each for a total of \$427,200.
- Axon full Service at a cost of \$17,000.
- A “cradlepoint” or other type router and antenna to allow for immediate upload of data for 350 cars at a cost of \$650,000.
- Data plan using “Firstnet” technology to be used in the router for 350 cars at \$34.99/month times 12 months – annual cost of \$146,958.
- “Door triggers” which would automatically activate the camera any time a car door is opened at a cost of \$100 per car times 350 cars for a total of \$35,000.
- “Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Integration” which allows individual data clips to be automatically labelled as the officer concludes a call for service of officer initiated activity that is logged through dispatch at a cost of \$180 each times 400 cameras for a total of \$72,000.

The following four years would include the cost of the digital management application employing unlimited data storage license for each unit, the data plan using "FirstNet" technology and the continued salary with an increase of 2.5% each year for the additional Audio/Video Technician. Those yearly costs are as follows:

- **Year Two total cost of \$623,524:**
 - A digital management application employing unlimited data storage license agreement at \$1,068 each for a total of \$427,200.
 - Data plan using "Firstnet" technology to be used in the router for 350 cars at \$34.99/month times 12 months – annual cost of \$146,958.
 - Audio/Video Technician salary of \$49,366.
- **Year Three total cost of \$624,758:**
 - A digital management application employing unlimited data storage license agreement at \$1,068 each for a total of \$427,200.
 - Data plan using "Firstnet" technology to be used in the router for 350 cars at \$34.99/month times 12 months – annual cost of \$146,958.
 - Audio/Video Technician salary of \$50,600.
- **Year Four total cost of \$626,024:**
 - A digital management application employing unlimited data storage license agreement at \$1,068 each for a total of \$427,200.
 - Data plan using "Firstnet" technology to be used in the router for 350 cars at \$34.99/month times 12 months – annual cost of \$146,958.
 - Audio/Video Technician salary of \$51,866.
- **Year Five total cost of \$626,320:**
 - A digital management application employing unlimited data storage license agreement at \$1,068 each for a total of \$427,200.
 - Data plan using "Firstnet" technology to be used in the router for 350 cars at \$34.99/month times 12 months – annual cost of \$146,958.
 - Audio/Video Technician salary of \$52,162.

At the end of this five-year period, a new five year contract period would begin, and most likely resulting in an increased per year cost of at least 3-5%. However, I do want to point out that this set-up keeps us from getting stuck trying to make old technology work, because this vendor sends new body cameras every two and a half years as part of this five-year contract.

References

Brett Chapman, "Body-worn Cameras: What the Evidence Tells Us," *NIJ Journal* 280, January 2019, <https://www.nij.gov/journals/280/Pages/body-worn-cameras-what-evidence-tells-us.aspx>.

Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-504(u)

(u) (1) Video taken by a law enforcement body camera that depicts the following shall be treated as confidential and not subject to public inspection:

(A) Minors, when taken within a school that serves any grades from kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12);

(B) The interior of a facility licensed under title 33 or title 68; or

(C) The interior of a private residence that is not being investigated as a crime scene.

(2) Nothing in this subsection (u) shall prevent the district attorney general or attorney general and reporter and counsel for a defendant charged with a criminal offense from providing to each other in a pending criminal case or appeal, where the constitutional rights of the defendant require it, information which otherwise may be held confidential under this subsection (u).

(3) Nothing in this subsection (u) shall be used to limit or deny access to otherwise public information because a file, document, or data file contains some information made confidential by subdivision (u)(1); provided, that confidential information shall be redacted before any access is granted to a member of the public.

(4) Nothing in this subsection (u) shall be construed to limit access to records by law enforcement agencies, courts, or other governmental agencies performing official functions.

(5) This subsection (u) is deleted on July 1, 2022, and shall no longer be effective on and after such date.

Attachment A



**KNOXVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE**



Administrative Memorandum

	Number: EMT-19-09	Date: October 31, 2019
Subject: Body Worn Cameras	Distribution: All Personnel	

The following procedures, as well as General Order 2.16, In-car Recording Equipment, shall be in effect for all employees that utilize body worn cameras in conjunction with their current in-car camera equipment. The procedures outlined herein are supplemental to the requirements of General Order 2.16, and are not intended to supersede those requirements except as may be clearly stated herein.

Policy:

This policy is intended to provide members of the Knoxville Police Department with instructions on when and how to use body worn cameras in conjunction with their in-car recording equipment so that members may reliably record their contacts with the public.

Purpose:

The purpose of utilizing body cameras in conjunction with in-car recording equipment is to monitor all contacts with a person in the community in all situations possible.

- I. Procedures
 - 1. Body worn cameras shall be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and the Knoxville Police Department training and policies.
 - 2. Body worn cameras are issued to officers selected by the Command Staff as "test" officers.
 - 3. Officers shall position the body worn camera in a manner to facilitate optimum recording field of view, while also ensuring the ability to safely activate the camera prior to, or during an incident. This will correspond to the best practices detailed in training provided by the Technical Services Unit of the Knoxville Police Department.

4. Officers shall utilize the body worn camera to record all contact with citizens in the performance of official duties as defined within this policy. This excludes those casual interactions between officers and citizens not necessarily related to law enforcement activities (such as getting a snack from an establishment or while inside a restaurant not responding to a call for service). If the body worn camera is activated, whether automatically or otherwise, in this type of situation, the officer shall verbalize the reason for stopping the recording prior to deactivating the body worn camera.
5. Once a body worn camera is activated, whether automatically or otherwise, it shall not be intentionally turned off until the incident has reached a conclusion. If it becomes necessary to discuss issues surrounding an investigation with a supervisor or another officer in private, the officer may enable the “mute” function of their body worn camera; thereby preventing their private conversation from being recorded. Prior to activating the “mute” function, the officer shall verbalize the reason for muting the recording.
6. Prior to each shift members shall inspect the body worn camera for any physical damage and to ensure the system is fully charged and operational. Only fully charged and operational systems shall be used. Equipment malfunctions shall be brought to the attention of the member’s supervisor as soon as possible and an email sent to the Technical Services Supervisor stating the malfunction or issue.
7. Members shall only use body worn cameras issued by the Knoxville Police Department. The body worn camera equipment and all data, images, video, and metadata captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the Knoxville Police Department.
8. Members who are assigned body worn cameras must complete agency approved training to ensure proper use and operation. Additional training may be provided as needed to ensure the continued effective use and operation of the equipment, proper calibrations and performance, and to incorporate changes, updates, or other revision in policy and equipment.
9. Requests for deletion of portions of recordings (e.g., in the event of an inadvertent, personal recording) must be submitted in writing and approved by the Patrol Division Commander or commander’s designee, in consultation with the Law Department as necessary. All requests and final decisions shall be kept on file within the Technical Services Unit.
10. Members shall note whether a body worn camera was recording during an incident in all required reports. However, body worn camera recordings are not a replacement for written reports.

II. Documentation

1. Members will need to be logged into the AXON View XL Application, located on their MDT, at the beginning of each shift.
2. Whenever an officer records an incident or any portion of an incident, which that officer reasonably believes will lead to a citizen complaint, the officer shall immediately bring it to the attention of the officer’s supervisor.

3. Officers wearing a body worn camera may use the system to capture statements from victims, witnesses, and suspects in place of utilizing a digital recorder.
4. Once a video is captured and the recording is complete, the following steps will take place:
 - i. Go to the “Review” tab in the AXON View XL.
 - ii. In the “Incident ID” field, add the report number if available.
 - iii. In the “Incident Title” field, add the ten code that correlates to the call.
 - iv. In the “Incident Category” field, add the category that best describes the disposition of the event.
 - v. **IMPORTANT** – select “**Prioritize Upload**” for each recording.
 - vi. Then click “Submit.”
5. All recordings pending submission will automatically offload 6 hours after being recorded. At that point, any information that needs to be updated should be done through Evidence.com.

III. Retention of Video

1. The retention of body worn camera video is the same as described in General Order 2.16 and City Ordinance 2-771.
2. The storage of video clips is within Evidence.com.

IV. Operational Prohibitions/Restrictions

1. Body worn cameras shall be used only in conjunction with official law enforcement duties. The body worn camera shall not generally be used to record:
 - i. Communication with other police personnel without the permission of the Chief of Police;
 - ii. Encounters with undercover officers or confidential informants;
 - iii. When on break or otherwise engaged in personal activities;
 - iv. In any location where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a restroom or locker room.
2. Department issued body worn cameras are intended for official Departmental use only and are not to be used for frivolous or personal activities. Intentional misuse or abuse of the units will result in disciplinary action.
3. Under no circumstances shall any recording be used or shown for the sole purpose of bringing ridicule or embarrassment upon any person.
4. Officers shall not edit, alter, erase, duplicate or record, copy, share, or otherwise distribute in any manner body worn camera recordings without prior written authorization and approval of the Chief of Police or their designee.

5. In incidents involving an officer's use of force (as defined in General Order 1.6) officers may review their video of the incident before the officer has completed their user of force report.

V. Accountability, Review, and Security

1. Members authorized under this policy may review video as it relates to:
 - i. Their involvement in an incident for the purposes of completing a criminal investigation and preparing official reports;
 - ii. Prior to courtroom testimony or for courtroom presentation;
 - iii. Providing a statement pursuant to an administrative inquiry/investigation
 - iv. For training purposes.
2. Access to recordings within the department shall be granted to authorized users only.
3. Release of body worn camera files will follow the same procedures as described in General Order 2.16, In-car Recording Equipment.

VI. Supervisory Responsibilities

1. Supervisory personnel shall ensure that officers equipped with body worn camera devices are utilizing them in accordance with this policy.
2. The officer's immediate supervisor shall review at least two recordings per officer per month from the body worn camera and document the review (*this is in addition to the in-car camera system*).
3. Should circumstances require the immediate retrieval of a body worn camera device, a supervisor shall respond to the scene to secure the body worn camera. The body worn camera device will then be given to the responding Technical Services member.


Chief of Police