



Sheridan Police Department  
Policies and Procedures  
12.6  
Chapter 12 - Evidence & Property  
Section 6 - Body Worn Cameras

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### 12.6.1 Purpose

The Sheridan Police Department Policy is intended to identify the procedures and practices applied to the lawful use of body-worn cameras (BWC), hereafter referred to as BWC.

- A. Accurate documentation of events, actions, conditions, and statements made during the course of an incident. The BWC may also be useful in documenting crime and accident scenes or other events that include the confiscation and documentation of evidence or contraband.
- B. To enhance the officer's ability to document and review statements and actions for both internal reporting requirements and for courtroom preparation and presentation;
- C. For officer evaluation including the ability to review:
  - 1. Probable cause for arrest;
  - 2. Arrest procedures; and
  - 3. Officer and suspect interaction.
- D. For officer training, including as an impartial measurement for self-critique and field evaluation during new officer training; and
- E. To protect from false claims of impropriety.

### 12.6.2 Definitions

- A. BWC – Body-worn camera
- B. Body Worn Camera – An on-officer audio-video system (BWC) currently authorized as the sole means of overt on-officer audio-video recording.
- C. Agency Administrator – Video storage system administrator(s) with full access to user rights.
- D. End User – BWC user with individual account access rights to video storage system.
- E. Evidence Transfer Machine (ETM) – A server with built-in docking stations physically installed in the Sheridan Police Department. The ETM simultaneously recharges the BWC battery while uploading all digitally encrypted data. The ETM then transfers the data to provided storage.
- F. A local server or online Web-based digital media storage facility may be used. The virtual warehouse stores digitally encrypted data in a highly secure environment accessible to personnel based on a security clearance.
- G. Media or Data – Includes photographs, audio recordings and video footage. The media is stored digitally.

### 12.6.3 Operating Procedures

- A. BWC equipment is issued primarily to uniformed personnel as authorized by this agency. Officers who are assigned BWC equipment must use the equipment unless otherwise authorized by supervisory personnel. Officers who are working special assignments in uniform such as grant funded traffic enforcement shall also obtain and use BWC equipment unless otherwise authorized by supervisory personnel.
- B. Police personnel shall use only BWCs issued by this department. The BWC equipment and all data, images, video, and metadata captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the agency.
- C. Officers shall wear the BWC system in the prescribed manner and location: shoulder mount, collar/epaulet mount, glasses mount or hat mount.
- D. Police personnel who are assigned BWCs must complete an agency approved and/or provided training program to ensure proper use and operation. Additional training may be required at periodic intervals to ensure the continued effective use and operation of the equipment, proper calibration and performance, and to incorporate changes, updates, or other revisions in policy and equipment.
- E. BWC equipment is the responsibility of individual officers and will be used with reasonable care to ensure proper functioning. Equipment malfunctions shall be brought to the attention of the officer's supervisor as soon as possible so that a replacement unit may be procured.
- F. Each uniformed officer assigned a body-worn camera is responsible for ensuring that they are equipped with a Department-issued body-worn camera and that the camera is fully charged and in good working order at the beginning of their shift. If maintenance issues are noted officers shall notify their supervisor of any problems.
- G. Officers shall ensure and confirm that BWC data transfer has been completed before the end of their shift, or at the end of an assigned duty/event.
- H. The BWC will automatically activate when the vehicle's emergency warning equipment is in operation. In instances where the BWC has not been automatically activated, officers shall manually activate the BWC to record all calls for service, investigatory or enforcement contacts with citizens in the performance of official duties. Exceptions include:
  - 1. When determining to record interviews with victims, witnesses and members of the community who wish to share information, officers should take into consideration both the evidentiary value of the recording and the subject's comfort with speaking on camera. If a person is unwilling to provide the information while being recorded, officers may decide that obtaining the information is more important than recording;
  - 2. Recording conversations with confidential informants;
  - 3. During community outreach events, such as giving a talk to a citizen group or making public contacts.
- I. Officers are not required to notify the public they are being recorded, Wyoming State law requires only one person consent/notice. In locations where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a residence, they may decline to be recorded unless the recording is being made pursuant to a valid investigation from a place where the officer is lawfully allowed to be present, is made during the lawful arrest of an individual in the residence, or is being made in conjunction with a lawful search of the residence. The BWC shall remain activated until the event is completed in order to ensure the integrity of the recording unless:

1. The contact moves into an area that is restricted;
  2. It is necessary to discuss issues or concerns with another officer or supervisor in private. During this time the BWC may be temporarily turned off. The intention to stop the recording will be noted by the officer verbally on the BWC. (Example: “Recording stopped to obtain personal identifying information of witness.”);
  3. The event is protracted and continued recording is of no value (i.e. traffic control, crash scenes, extended perimeters; officer is on scene but in no position to record, etc.). In instances that warrant the system being deactivated, the officer should verbally record the reason for the deactivation. For example, “recording stopped due to extended perimeter.”
- J. If an officer fails to activate the BWC, fails to record the entire contact, or interrupts the recording, the officer shall document in their report why a recording was not made, was interrupted, or was terminated.
- K. Civilians shall not be allowed to review the recordings at the scene.
- L. Officers shall note in incident, arrest, and related reports when recordings were made during the incident in question. However, BWC recordings are not a replacement for written reports.
- M. Officers are encouraged to inform their supervisor of any recordings that may be of value for training purposes.
- N. If an officer is suspected of wrongdoing or involved in an officer-involved shooting or other serious use of force, the department reserves the right to limit or restrict an officer from viewing the media file.
- O. Requests for deletion of a recording (e.g., in the event of a personal recording or inadvertent recording) must be submitted in writing and approved by the Chief of Police or his or her designee. All requests and final decisions shall be kept on file.

#### **12.6.4 Restrictions on Using the BWC**

- A. BWCs shall be used only in conjunction with official law enforcement duties. The BWC shall not be used to record:
1. Communications with other police personnel without the permission of the Chief of Police;
  2. Encounters with undercover officers or confidential informants;
  3. When on break or otherwise engaged in personal activities; or
  4. In any location where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a restroom or locker room.
  5. Officers will only use the BWC in patient care areas of a healthcare facility when the recording is for official purposes and caution should be used to record only the parties involved in the event being investigated.

#### **12.6.5 Supervisory Responsibilities**

- A. Supervisory personnel shall ensure that officers equipped with BWC devices utilize them in accordance with policy and procedures defined herein.
- B. Supervisors will randomly review BWC recordings to ensure that: the equipment is operating properly; that officers are using the devices appropriately and in accordance with policy; and monitor officer performance to identify training issues, provide performance critiques or to investigate citizen complaints.

**12.6.6 Recording Control and Management**

- A. In certain critical incidents, such as an officer involved shooting; the officer’s supervisor or other command personnel shall take custody of the officers BWC and shall be responsible for uploading the data via the ETM.
- B. The media captured by the BWC will be uploaded and stored either in the cloud or on a local server.
- C. Officers shall tag each media file using the predefined list in the video storage system software (i.e. traffic stop, arrest, use of force, etc.), during or at the end of their current shift, or at the beginning of their next shift, to ensure that the files are stored properly. Report numbers, call numbers and nature of the incident should also be applied to specific media files, if applicable.
- D. All media uploaded to storage system shall be tagged with the most appropriate retention category. The following are the available categories, the retention duration and examples of media that should be associated with each category:

**(DRAFT CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW with the STATE)**

<b>Retention Categories for Video Storage System</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Retention Duration</b>	<b>Category Description</b>
Inadvertent	90 Days	The camera was activated accidentally.
Incident Non-Report	90 Days	Enforcement action where a report is not required such as tobacco violations and DUS.
Incident Report	180 Days	Incidents requiring a report but not resulting in physical arrest.
Officer Injury	180 Days	Incident results in officer injury and another category isn’t appropriate.
Physical Arrests	180 Days	All incidents resulting in a physical arrest.
Traffic Stop	90 Days	The contact is solely based on traffic enforcement.
Use of Force/Vehicle Pursuit	90 Days	Incidents where a supervisory review is required by policy. This category will supersede all others if the requirement exists.

- F. At a minimum, media shall be stored and retained for the duration as set forth in the State of Wyoming Public Records Retention schedule or until no longer needed as evidence, whichever is longer. For storage and budgetary considerations media may be transferred to approved digital storage format by the evidence division and will be retained pursuant to Wyoming State Statute retention schedule. In the event the media is transferred to disc, the entire recording shall be transferred. No editing or redacting of the media file shall be permitted.
- G. All media recorded by the BWC remain the exclusive property of the Sheridan Police

Department. All access may be audited to ensure that only authorized users are accessing the media for legitimate and authorized purposes.

#### H. Duplication of Discs

1. Disc duplication shall be done by the evidence technician.
2. The specific segment requested shall be identified and only that portion will be reproduced.
3. The duplicate disc shall be labeled with the date of duplication.
4. Discs shall not be released without having a duplicate copy made and the original returned to records.
5. A duplication fee equal to the expense incurred in duplicating the media may be assessed.
6. Redaction of any confidential information shall be done on any media file prior to release, consistent with the redaction of any other record.
7. Redaction of media will be completed only by staff who have received the appropriate training. A duplicate copy of the released redacted media shall be retained until the original media is destroyed.

#### I. Recording Requests

1. Requests for copies of media or media review by criminal defendants or their attorneys shall be referred to the appropriate prosecutor's office.
2. Requests for media from criminal justice agencies, other than local prosecutor's offices, shall be submitted in writing to the support services lieutenant.
3. Media will not be released to other than bona fide criminal justice agencies without following the guidelines and procedures in Sheridan Police Department Records Release Policy 14.4.

#### J. Officer Review of Recorded Media

1. Officers shall have "review access" as an end user to recorded media downloaded from their assigned BWC. This is to allow an officer to review media as he/she prepares reports, prepares for court, and for self-critique. Officers involved in critical incidents, such as an officer involved shooting, shall be restricted from reviewing the video prior to completing their incident report or giving a statement.
2. The Department reserves the right to limit or restrict any officer from viewing media or accessing the BWC system or software.
3. Officers shall not edit, alter, erase, duplicate, copy, share, or otherwise distribute in any manner BWC recordings without prior written authorization and approval of the Chief of Police or his or her designee.
4. Supervisors may review media of their respective subordinates.
5. By an investigator who is participating in an official investigation.
6. Recorded media may be used for training purposes with the proper authorization from the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
7. Under no circumstances shall recorded media be used for entertainment purposes or in an attempt to embarrass another officer or private citizen.
8. Any uploading or converting of media for use on any type of social media is strictly prohibited unless authorized in advance and in writing by the Chief of Police or his/her

designee.

9. Officers shall not make copies of any media for their personal use, and are prohibited from using a recording device (such as a camera phone or secondary video camera) to record media from the repository.

#### 12.6.7. **Policy Review**

- A. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, by a team designated by the Chief of Police.