

# METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT – CITY OF ST. LOUIS

## Intra-Department Report and Correspondence Sheet

**Date:** February 10, 2016

**To:** Col. D. Samuel Dotson  
Commissioner of Police

**From:** Will Werner  
Police Planner

**Subject:** BWC Group Two, Week Four Survey Results

**Copies:** Assistant Chief, LTC Lawrence O'Toole  
BoE Commander, LTC Jerry Leyshock

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Sir,

The purpose of this memo is to update you on the results of the Group Two, Week Four Surveys regarding BWCs. At 7:00am Wednesday, Feb 10, 79.2% of Sergeants wearing issued BWCs had completed the survey. The numbers of surveys completed by Assignment Code are as follows:

Assignment	Number of Responses
301	2
302	2
303	3
304	3
305	3
306	1
340	2
341	3

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Respectfully,

Will Werner

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The below table is a list of questions with the average response from the officers that completed the survey. A rating of 3 is neutral. The higher the score the more officers DISAGREED with the statement. The LOWER the score the more they AGREED.

The rating scale is as follows:

1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly Disagree

Question	Group 2, Week 4 Average	Group 2, Week 1 Average	Group 1, Week 4 Average
I spend less time completing paperwork with a BWC	3.79	3.75	3.6
My accounts of incidents are more accurate with a BWC	2.89	2.7	2.8
Evidence quality is better with a BWC	2.58	2.6	2.67
I would voluntarily wear a BWC even if it was not mandatory	3.84	4	3.93
BWC's make my job easier	3.58	3.8	3.47
BWC's make it easier to work with the CAO during warrant application	3.11	2.9	3.07
Citizens are more cooperative when they know I wear a BWC	3.37	3.2	3.07
Citizens are more respectful when they know I wear a BWC	3.53	3.2	3.4
Suspects resist arrest MORE when they know I wear a BWC	3.32	2.95	3.2
Suspects are generally MORE AGGRESSIVE when they know I wear a BWC	3.21	3	3.13
BWC's hurt 'police-community' relations	3.26	4.1	3
Cameras will increase citizen complaints against officers	3.53	3.2	3.2
Officers will be less likely to give warnings while wearing a BWC	2.63	2.7	2.47
Officers will have fewer contacts with citizens	2.16	2.45	2.07
Officers will feel like they have less discretion	2.26	2.05	2.27
Officers will be more cautious in making decisions	2.26	2.15	2.13
Officers will act more professionally	2.74	2.5	2.93
BWC's affect an officer's decision to use force	2.42	1.85	2.13
It is easy to locate and retrieve video for a specific event	2.11	2.75	2.53
BWC Equipment is easy to use	2.53	2.85	2.93
BWC Equipment is comfortable to wear	3.26	3.9	3.67

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Battery life of the camera is adequate	2.05	2	2.53
Video is easy to download data at the end of shift	2.00	2.2	2.2
The SO is easy to understand	2.63	2.8	2.67
The SO is too restrictive; officers are required to record too much	2.84	2.95	2.87
The SO is too detailed	3.16	3.1	3.13
Body cameras are well received by coworkers	4.26	4.4	4.47
Police benefit more from body cameras than citizens	3.00	3.15	3.13
Wearing a BWC improves officers' job satisfaction	3.95	3.9	4.2
Cameras improve officer training	2.89	2.8	3.07
Cameras improve overall job performance	3.47	3.2	3.53
Cameras tend to increase office safety	3.58	3.5	3.73
Cameras should be expanded to other police departments	3.42	3.3	3.53
Cameras should be worn by all sworn officers in all Police Departments	3.95	3.85	3.93
Advantages of body cameras outweigh the disadvantages	3.21	3.35	3.73
The training I received on the technology was adequate	2.37	2.3	2.87
The training I received on the SO was adequate	2.47	3.1	3

Responses for questions requiring a written response are listed below.

### Please indicate what you believe to be the STRENGTHS of wearing a BWC

- *They can possibly discredit false complaints by citizens.*
- *The video images can be used as evidence against the suspect. The arresting Officer's actions and statements can not be disputed when a credibility issues are raised by the defense attorney.*
- *Citizens seem to be less likely to complain about officers when I am present with the BWC.*
- *it cuts down on complaints*
- *Video recording is undisputable*
- *Video of suspects making confessions*
- *It records some of the incident*
- *It is nice that a person does not have to get the footage from another location. Download times vary. I think the best one was about 7 minutes on today's date. It may have been sooner.*
- *Evidence when a citizen makes a bogus complaint against the police.*
- *Protection for Officer.*
- *fairly accurate portrayal of events on a scene*
- *investigations into police misconduct or false complaints*
- *Citizens will not be able to lie about what an officer did or said*
- *It may help in disproving a complaint.*

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**Please indicate what you believe to be the WEAKNESSES of wearing a BWC.**

- *BWCs restrict pro-active police work by officers, and keep officers from seeking supervisory guidance from sergeants operating BWCs. In the role of SWAT, recording specialized tactics on warrant entries and 7250s is a safety issue for the officers.*
- *The camera can record confidential information, search warrant information, department personnel pedigree information, recording of sex crime victim interviews, juvenile victim interviews and citizens complaints against criminals in their neighborhood could all be subject to the sunshine law.*
- *Battery life is not that good.*
- *glare from flashlights or lights in general needs to block glare. A lense to block glare should be developed one.*
- *No discretion*
- *Officer Safety when you are trying to activate the camera during a critical moment*
- *It only records what the officer sees or possibly sees.*
- *Officers will be less likely to be proactive, and less likely to call a supervisor for guidance. It is a belief that there will be criticism on officers' and supervisors' actions. I forgot to call out on a stop, and I am constantly looking down at the light in between beeps. I need to stop looking at the light.*
- *Constant second guessing by commanders.*
- *Obtrusive.*
- *I believe until Officers are versed in the uses of the cameras and the benefits of wearing them, Officers will be hesitant to use appropriate actions and Officer's will be injured.*
- *Officers not wanting to get involved in police work, doing only a bare minimum.*
- *Officers will be hesitant in using proper force*
- *The camera effects an Officers judgment to use deadly force. The Officer may become overly cautious because they do not want to appear to be doing something wrong.*

**Please generally describe your experience wearing the BWC during the pilot period.**

- *I have operated the BWC on patrol and during warrant entries. I believe officers are less productive and are less likely to consult a supervisor when they know the supervisor is recording. In effect, BWCs limit the productivity of officers. On warrant entries, I have found on several occasions I have either forgotten to record, or failed to properly begin recording, due to the simple fact that my mind is occupied by much more necessary and safety related tasks.*
- *Easy to use.*
- *Easy to retrieve and tag videos.*
- *Have had no problems with it. Officers and especially commanders or likely not to speak while it is on and ask you to turn it off.*
- *overall its been an ok experience*
- *it was a good learning experience*
- *Not much different than normal*
- *It is hard to ensure it is working correctly. the only way to ensure the quality of video is to shoot a test video on every shift.*
- *It was required*
- *There should be a category for N/A I did not have any cases with the circuit attorney as of this writing. I did not have anyone combative. I am concerned for the cameras not being locked up in the bunker. Anyone could pick up the camera and record God knows what, when I am not at work. The person could stand behind the camera and we would never know who had it. Hopefully the camera will be left alone.*
- *NO ONE wants them. NO ONE wants you to come to their calls. NO ONE wants to talk to you out of fear they're being recorded.*

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- *As a Sergeant, I am typically not the first on the scene, therefore, the incident may not be completely captured.*
- *I was only able to utilize the camera for a short period of time due to a death in the family and vacation, but the little I did use the camera I felt it could be a useful tool and will help in the future. There will be speed bumps in the process that I feel will jeopardize Officers safety.*
- *I did not like wearing the camera. I especially didn't like the flex system. Too many pieces and parts to come loose. The simplest design would be more effective.*
- *The equipment is to cumbersome when on warrants*
- *My experience was limited; during the period I used the camera the weather was extremely cold and there were very few opportunities to use the camera.*

### **Please list any changes to the proposed policy/SO you would make.**

- *I would release SWAT supervisors from the BWC requirement on warrant entries and 7250s, and require the affiant's supervisor or on-scene district supervisor to operate one from the scene's exterior.*
- *again we should be allowed to narrate video to show intent*
- *Video recordings will not be used against an Officer in Criminal or Civil proceedings.*
- *The wording officer when this program is for supervisors is confusing. Is it possible to change the wording to "officer or sergeant"?*
- *A graph with the various topics checked yes and no, such as NO for peaceful protests and psych patients. Transporting prisoners in the Yes column. another column discretionary recording*
- *I'd get rid of them. Truth.*
- *I feel that anyone that would like to, could volunteer to wear one. It would increase your pool and allow Patrolmen to participate.*
- *It wouldn't be as bad if the policy was to allow the officers to film at their discretion. If the officer could recognize a situation was deteriorating and wished to protect him/herself from false accusations they could activate the camera. Also, if force was used, they could retroactively activate the camera, to document the incident using the buffer feature. But to just record everything doesn't make sense, the officers should be able to use it to their advantage not as a liability.*

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### **Please list any other information you believe is relevant to this pilot program.**

- *I can see the pros as well as the cons with wearing a body camera.*
- *Pilot program should have been utilized on Police Officers, not Sergeants to provide an accurate understanding on the benefits of body cameras.*
- *Have a question what is something positive about the special orders?*
- *The training could include more positive outcomes of the cameras, such as the citizen complaint when the lady is trying to lie. I would like to see a physical fight or a struggle. Need a save button for this survey! so I can comeback to finish it. List the special order number 5-34. Sergeants will be more likely to look at it when answering questions if they don't have a printout of it in their body camera folder. electronic survey is good*
- *Many feel angered by the fact the department can find money for cameras and storage, yet can't give us a decent raise for the last TEN YEARS!*
- *I had the camera shoulder mounted using magnets. When I put my yellow safety vest on during an highway accident, the camera was covered up by the vest. When I took my vest off, the camera and magnets fell off my coat, skidding across the highway. Luckily I was able to retrieve all the pieces without getting run over. The pieces were not damaged but the mounting is terrible.*

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