

# METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT – CITY OF ST. LOUIS

## Intra-Department Report and Correspondence Sheet

**Date:** January 11, 2016

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

**From:** Will Werner  
Police Planner

**Subject:** BWC Week Four Survey Results

**Copies:**

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Sir,

The purpose of this memo is to update you on the results of the week four surveys regarding BWCs. At 7am Monday, January 11, 62.5% 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	3
303	3
304	1
305	3
306	0
340	2
341	1

During the first month of the Pilot, the Department generated 300 videos totaling 47.31 hours (34.84 GB). That is an average of 10.34 videos per day totaling 1.63 hours (1.20 GB). Looking closer at the user data there are some concerns. Specifically, there are only a handful of Sergeants that regularly used the cameras. See user data below.

	Hours	Total Videos	Total Evidence MB
Sgt 1	7.91	33	6054.77
Sgt 2	5.63	21	3924.22
Sgt 3	5.01	25	3886.45
Sgt 4	5.05	14	3829.80
Sgt 5	4.56	27	3572.02
Sgt 6	3.39	22	2393.39
Sgt 7	2.38	18	1806.71
Sgt 8	2.17	32	1708.63
Sgt 9	2.18	9	1682.05
Sgt 10	1.04	6	800.89

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Sgt 11	1.18	6	799.24
Sgt 12	1.00	9	792.85
Sgt 13	0.86	7	647.77
Sgt 14	0.79	6	612.97
Sgt 15	0.73	4	572.72
Sgt 16	0.73	3	527.37
Sgt 17	0.69	22	500.40
Sgt 18	0.51	11	382.06
Sgt 19	0.38	2	293.83
Sgt 20	0.27	6	206.41
Sgt 21	0.26	3	202.90
Sgt 22	0.26	6	200.69
Sgt 23	0.21	2	164.87
Sgt 24	0.15	6	111.49

Half of the Sergeants in the Pilot generated less than an hour of video each for the entire four weeks. It is possible that some Sergeants did not have events that warranted recording or were on vacation. In reviewing the videos, it would appear that one Sergeant simply turned the camera on once everyday for about 30 seconds to 1 minute and never captured anything beyond his desk. Given that most of the videos covering actual incidents last from 20 minutes to an hour and have multiple officers walking around on scene, it would stand to reason that, with a full deployment on officers, incidents will generate multiple hours of video. As it stands now, it will be very difficult to estimate our data needs from the data collected thus far.

The survey data fluctuate significantly during the four weeks. As you can see below, there was not much change in responses from the pre-test to the final survey.

Finally regarding the written responses, the Pilot has generated some very good feedback. Specifically, it is clear that the training will need to be more comprehensive, which we have already met and spoken with the folks from TASER to address the need in the next training. Sergeants have also provided useful information on the cameras themselves. They have illustrated that there are positive and drawbacks to both models. This information will be invaluable during the RFP process.

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	Pre-Test Average	Week 4
I spend less time completing paperwork with a BWC	3.64	3.60
My accounts of incidents are more accurate with a BWC	2.86	2.80
Evidence quality is better with a BWC	2.64	2.67
I would voluntarily wear a BWC even if it was not mandatory	3.73	3.93
BWC's make my job easier	3.57	3.47
BWC's make it easier to work with the CAO during warrant application	2.86	3.07
Citizens are more cooperative when they know I wear a BWC	3.36	3.07
Citizens are more respectful when they know I wear a BWC	3.36	3.40
Suspects resist arrest MORE when they know I wear a BWC	3.07	3.20
Suspects are generally MORE AGGRESSIVE when they know I wear a BWC	3.15	3.13
BWC's hurt 'police-community' relations	3.27	3.00
Cameras will increase citizen complaints against officers	3.31	3.20
Officers will be less likely to give warnings while wearing a BWC	2.88	2.47
Officers will have fewer contacts with citizens	2.56	2.07
Officers will feel like they have less discretion	1.56	2.27
Officers will be more cautious in making decisions	2.25	2.13
Officers will act more professionally	2.63	2.93
BWC's affect an officer's decision to use force	2.31	2.13
It is easy to locate and retrieve video for a specific event	2.86	2.53

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BWC Equipment is easy to use	2.8	2.93
BWC Equipment is comfortable to wear	3.27	3.67
Battery life of the camera is adequate	2.93	2.53
Video is easy to download data at the end of shift	2.93	2.20
The SO is easy to understand	2.73	2.67
The SO is too restrictive; officers are required to record too much	2.93	2.87
The SO is too detailed	3.27	3.13
Body cameras are well received by coworkers	4.38	4.47
Police benefit more from body cameras than citizens	3.13	3.13
Wearing a BWC improves officers' job satisfaction	4	4.20
Cameras improve officer training	2.67	3.07
Cameras improve overall job performance	3.56	3.53
Cameras tend to increase office safety	3.56	3.73
Cameras should be expanded to other police departments	3.38	3.53
Cameras should be worn by all sworn officers in all Police Departments	3.81	3.93
Advantages of body cameras outweigh the disadvantages	3.31	3.73
The training I received on the technology was adequate	2.94	2.87
The training I received on the SO was adequate	3.38	3.00

Responses for questions requiring a written response are listed below.

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

- *Easy to use and download.*
- *citizen complaints*
- *BWC's are great for quick suspect interviews on the street; they don't seem to know what they are. A BWC's also negate having to photograph scenes we would otherwise have to take photos.*
- *I do not see the benefit*
- *I believe that since the BWC can be used to record and document incidents, wherein Officers are interacting with or arresting suspects, it has the potential of being beneficial to those Officers, by corroborating their statements and versions of events.*
- *Ability to record spontaneous statements, general chatter, faces and behavior of witnesses, victims and suspects/offenders and of potential suspects/offenders.*
- *Increased detail in report writing as well as courtroom testimony.*
- *Recently my Detectives stopped a vehicle and spoke with the driver for several minutes. While speaking to him they could smell an odor of marijuana and noticed he appeared to be extremely nervous. When they ordered him to exit the vehicle he placed the vehicle in drive and accelerated away. The camera would*

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*have been beneficial with proving the identity of the driver. However, they would need the freedom to be able to stop recording so that while following the vehicle we would not expose our tactics.*

- *As I have stated before, I feel the strength of the BWC is the ability to document incidents and people at said incidents while keeping your hands free.*
- *Documentation of incidents. Citizens may react in a positive way when they know they are being recorded. Officers may act more professionally.*
- *Records incidents*
- *Evidence collection is better*

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

- *Maybe have embossed wording 'Recording' and 'Stand-by' next to separate indicator lights.*
- *Discretion*
- *Just to reiterate my previous comments, I believe witnesses will be reluctant to speak to an officer on a homicide scene. There's been several times in my career bystanders have provided me or of my colleagues with information concerning the incident on an anonymous basis. These folks will be reluctant to do the same if they know BWC's are in play.*
- *We should be able to view other's camera footage. For example, when SWAT executes a search warrant for my subordinates, I should be able to view the footage.*
- *The camera will make officers second guess themselves when force is needed and justified. I see it as a major officer safety issue.*
- *The BWC is somewhat cumbersome, due to the fact that the camera must be connected to the battery pack via a chord. The chord then has the potential of getting in the way or obstructing the Officer, while he/she is performing his/her duties. Furthermore, many Officers experience difficulties fitting all of their equipment, which includes the Department issued taser, on their duty belts and/or their persons. Some Officers may find it very difficult to be able to comfortably fit a camera and a battery pack on their persons. I also have concerns about the equipment becoming easily displaced, in the event of an Officer becoming involved in a physical altercation with a suspect who is resisting arrest.*
- *It picks up extraneous conversations by Officers of all ranks that are not pertinent to the investigation.*
- *Uncomfortable, hard to remember to start recording under pressure and should be the last thing you are thinking about in a life and death situation.*
- *Hard to wear the Flex Camera and use the restroom dictating you remove part of the equipment = less time on the street.*
- *I have been wearing the FLEX Model during the pilot program and have developed a hatred for it. I have been positioning the base in the front pouch of my exterior vest, the size of the device prevents me from storing my phone in this pouch. As a supervisor, I am constantly in contact with my detectives and trying to dig through my pockets to get my phone out is annoying. I am constantly getting tangled up in the wire while getting in and out of the car, or just moving my head from side to side. The camera often gets pulled which causes the focus of the camera to change. While searching vehicles the camera has fallen off the head piece numerous times and has secured itself to the side of the vehicle with the magnet. If I was not paying attention I would have likely lost the camera.*
- *As the weather has changed and gotten much colder, I have realized that when wearing a coat I can not zip up my coat more than half way without covering the BWC (AXON). Unless I do not know how to wear both, there should be a way to mount the AXON BWC to the outer most garment without obstructing the camera's view.*
- *Lessens officer discretion. Attention to the camera protocols may take the officer's focus off of safety issues.*
- *remembering to activate the BWC*

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- *Can not record while camera is buffering which causes your attention to be misdirected to the BWC while you should be paying attention to your safety and your citizens. Hard to get BWC out of clip on case.*
- *Officers will second guess themselves in critical incidents*

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

- *Just one more thing to try and remember to deploy.*
- *operation was a bit confusing*
- *The equipment of the flex program is not easy to wear and the cords are too long. They get wrapped up in other equipment.*
- *I believe the camera has the capability to assist Officers by documenting their actions with the public; however, I do have concerns about Officers being able to comfortably fit the extra equipment on their persons, without interference from a chord or wire.*
- *It has not been positive.*
- *As it was broken most of the time, I did not have a good experience with the Flex camera. Also, while I looked for opportunities to use the camera, I found that I would be leaving an incident and then think about turning the camera on.*
- *I started this program with an open mind and looked for ways this camera would be advantageous to what we do. I figured, if nothing else, just recording the demeanor and statements of the bad guy would be helpful. This week, my detectives stopped a vehicle, as I walked up, the driver, who had been removed from the vehicle, looked in my direction and said, "I know you, where have you been?" I recognized the driver as a gang member I had developed a rapport with years ago. We started talking and he told me that he had just put new tires on his vehicle because the police spiked them. I asked him, what happened, and he explained his buddy, was wanted for a Homicide Questioning, and had been arrested. I thought this would be a great opportunity to get him talking about what he knew about the homicide and have it recorded. I spoke with him for roughly ten minutes and he really did not say anything of value and spoke in general terms. When we finished up I went to turn the camera off and It did not make a noise to indicate it had stopped recording. Upon reviewing the video, it had shut off halfway into the interview due to the wire being slightly disconnected which occurred with normal body movements. My recommendation of the FLEX is that it is not a good fit for what we do. Any foot pursuit or sudden movements will cause a disconnect and the video footage will be lost. This will likely be used by the defense attorney to show that the officer must have turned the camera off during the foot pursuit because he beat his client or somehow violated his rights. I can only imagine the riots we would have if the officer was involved in a shooting and the camera had disconnected while engaging the bad guy. Another time this week, the camera had disconnected partially while seated in the vehicle. When we exited the vehicle to engage several subjects I had pressed the start button. I was several minutes into the stop before I realized it was not recording due to the disconnect.*
- *During the pilot period, I was assigned the AXON BWC and without actually wearing the FLEX BWC, just simply by comparing the two, I feel the AXON BWC is less likely to cause an officer safety issue. The FLEX has cord that locks into a separate battery pack and can be one more thing for a suspect to grab ahold of. Where as the AXON is one piece and mounts onto the shirt.*
- *The glasses are useless for officers that wear prescription glasses or need reading glasses. The other platforms are uncomfortable or hard to use.*
- *it was a positive experience, other officers do not like or trust the BWC*
- *I strongly dislike wearing this. The light on the BWC is distracting at night.*
- *Used the camera to document car stops and pedestrian checks*

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

- *Again, conversations regarding operations and with attorneys should be specifically addressed in the special order.*
- *Less restrictive - allow for more discretion.*
- *I think a blanket statement in regard to discretion needs to be addressed.*
- *I do not have any changes to the proposed Special Order at this time.*
- *The limit on recording demonstrations.*

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

- *more training and prep time is definitely needed prior to implementation of this program*
- *Lastly, there needs to be a jacket mount for the AXON. I resorted to using the large clip and just attaching the camera to my empty badge holder on my issued coat, resulting in the image being canted. There really has to be a better solution than this. One more thing: the Department really screwed the pooch when the in-car cameras were rolled out. There was no training in terms of giving officers the tools to use the in-car cameras as an effective law enforcement strategy. If a Department-wide BWC program is ever implemented, I think it's vitally important to provide a comprehensive class on effective methods to utilize the cameras. Having such a class will not only give our officers what they need to use these cameras, but this course of instruction will have value in terms of getting officers to buy in to these devices.*
- *The Flex is impractical. It is easy to knock off. The connectors (magnets, neck piece, eyewear) are not friendly. Not functional for outerwear. The eye wear connector does not work on all styles of glasses. Wireless needs to be explored.*
- *As a sergeant whose officers primarily are one man cars who write accidents and vehicle break ins, I did not have the necessary opportunities to fully test the equipment.*
- *From reviewing the video footage I have found that I like to illuminate key pieces of evidence, such as an expired temp tag, or spent cartridges on the street. I do this to draw attention to what I am observing so the viewer will also key in on what I am seeing. I have found that the flashlight will wash out what you are trying to bring attention to and it will not appear on video. I think this important to let others know so they know what to expect will be captured on video.*
- *Outside of what I have already stated above, I do not have any further comment at this time.*
- *There needs to be a dedicated place on your uniform for the BWC and what do you do in the winter when you need to wear your coat. There is no where to place it.*

