

# METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT – CITY OF ST. LOUIS

## Intra-Department Report and Correspondence Sheet

**Date:** December 14, 2015

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

**From:** Will Werner  
Police Planner

**Subject:** BWC Pre-Survey

**Copies:**

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Sir,

The purpose of this memo is to update you on the results of the initial pre-test regarding BWCs. At the start of the day Monday, December 14, 2015, 66.6% of Sergeants wearing issued BWCs had completed the survey. The numbers of surveys completed by Assignment Code are as follows:

301	2
302	2
303	2
304	2
305	3
306	3
340	2

The responses to the questions were generally neutral. This is expected due to the fact that the officers have not worn the cameras yet. The questions requiring a written response provided some interesting feedback from officers. Their responses are included.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. As the project progresses, I expect we should have some good, timely data to help draw conclusions regarding the administration of the program and the acceptance of BWCs.

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	Average
I spend less time completing paperwork with a BWC	3.64
My accounts of incidents are more accurate with a BWC	2.86
Evidence quality is better with a BWC	2.64
I would voluntarily wear a BWC even if it was not mandatory	3.73
BWC's make my job easier	3.57
BWC's make it easier to work with the CAO during warrant application	2.86
Citizens are more cooperative when they know I wear a BWC	3.36
Citizens are more respectful when they know I wear a BWC	3.36
Suspects resist arrest MORE when they know I wear a BWC	3.07
Suspects are generally MORE AGGRESSIVE when they know I wear a BWC	3.15
BWC's hurt 'police-community' relations	3.27
Cameras will increase citizen complaints against officers	3.31
Officers will be less likely to give warnings while wearing a BWC	2.88
Officers will have fewer contacts with citizens	2.56
Officers will feel like they have less discretion	1.56
Officers will be more cautious in making decisions	2.25
Officers will act more professionally	2.63
BWC's affect an officer's decision to use force	2.31
It is easy to locate and retrieve video for a specific event	2.86
BWC Equipment is easy to use	2.80
BWC Equipment is comfortable to wear	3.27
Battery life of the camera is adequate	2.93
Video is easy to download data at the end of shift	2.93
The SO is easy to understand	2.73
The SO is too restrictive; officers are required to record too much	2.93
The SO is too detailed	3.27
Body cameras are well received by coworkers	4.38
Police benefit more from body cameras than citizens	3.13
Wearing a BWC improves officers' job satisfaction	4.00
Cameras improve officer training	2.67
Cameras improve overall job performance	3.56

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Cameras tend to increase office safety	3.56
Cameras should be expanded to other police departments	3.38
Cameras should be worn by all sworn officers in all Police Departments	3.81
Advantages of body cameras outweigh the disadvantages	3.31
The training I received on the technology and SO was adequate	2.94
The training I received on the SO was adequate	3.38

Responses for questions requiring a written response are listed below.

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

- *I believe that the vast majority of officers perform their job with a high level of integrity and professionalism. Cameras will, more often than not, clear allegations against officers and lessen the amount of complaints made by citizens.*
- *Evidence preservation, scene documentation, assisting an officer with recalling events.*
- *I do believe the body camera can protect officers involved in citizen complaints.*
- *Can provide immediate feedback/insights on use of force situations to understand why the officer acted as they did. Can disprove allegations of wrong doing. Can prove wrong doings of suspects.*
- *Evidence for prosecution.*
- *I believe the body camera will be able to capture events that are of evidentiary value and will provide the Circuit Attorney's Office with footage that corroborates the Officer's version of events.*
- *Evidence review/testimony/reports*
- *Detailed accounts of events will be extremely accurate. Officers can review footage prior to writing a report to ensure accuracy.*
- *I think the BWC improves accountability and transparency. I think it improves community relations.*

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

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- *I believe cameras scare officers away from performing self initiated activity, only because they are not familiar with them. I think it will only become a matter of time for officers to become comfortable wearing them.*
- *Officers will be hesitant to conduct their normal activities. Discretion will be limited.*
- *seatbelt issues*
- *Officers will be apprehensive toward getting involved in self initiated activity.*
- *Can be used against officers for using discretion (drinking in public, BWs, other City ordinance violations, etc.) Can be used against officers for mistakes. In other words, malicious mistakes vs. unintentional/non-malicious mistakes. I'm short. Wearing it mid-torso & up is not going to help see someone or something up close! Field of view will not be beneficial.*
- *Creating an expectation for video on every arrest and incident, that becomes controversial. When video is absent the media/citizens/jurors/circuit attorneys office will be more critical of an incident when there is no reason to justify not believing the Officers account.*
- *One of my initial concerns is that Officers will feel like they do not have the same level of discretion to issue warnings and will feel like they are required to issue a ticket, a summons, or make an arrest for every minor infraction of the law.*
- *Officers second guessing themselves. Worrying about camera angles reduces safety. Less self initiated activity due to fear of disciplinary action.*
- *I believe that morale across the entire department will be negatively affected. I believe that officers are going to be too afraid of making a mistake to effectively do their job.*
- *I believe that various privacy issues are inherent in BWC.*
- *Officer's Discretion.*
- *I am concerned about officer safety and reactions to the camera being in use. I am also concerned about the resulting stress the cameras may place on individual officers as it pertains to completing otherwise normal tasks.*

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

- *Things to consider: juveniles are we to record conversations w/officers when determining charges, asking questions, obtaining more information or clarifying? that could bugger things up a bit.*

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- *I think that advising people that they are being recorded will only provoke and incite them. People like to be the center of attention, ie "World Star Hip Hop" channel.*
- *I believe the current Speical Order is very thorough and detailed. I would not make any changes at this time.*
- *SO not discussed at all in any training whatsoever. Complete lack of training on the goals and expectations of the command staff.*
- *For me, as a supervisor, the order seems fine for normal patrol operations. As a supervisor in a specialized unit, should the cameras become mandated for officers, I would want to make some serious changes and/or additions to protect against certain types of investigations while being deployed.*

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

- Officer's actions are also based upon experience, training and intuition. The camera although able to pick up the audio/visual, does not have that ability. This needs to be considered when reviewing BWC recordings.
- I feel the "wait and see" comments made by the Chief during the presentation to be extremely dangerous way of looking at things as it regards to possible litigation involving members of this department. I feel we are opening ourselves up to frivolous lawsuits just to appease the loud majority who think they want these cameras in use.

