



Kern County Sheriff's Office
Policies and Procedures

TITLE: Body Worn Camera Review		NO: J-3650	
APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner			
EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2021	REVIEWED: 07/27/2022	REVISED: 07/27/2022	UPDATED: 07/27/2022

PURPOSE

To establish a policy for the Kern County Sheriff’s Office to review, redact, audit, and produce data captured on body-worn cameras (BWCs). Transparency is paramount to advancing public trust and the core intent of this policy is to ensure events are recorded and law enforcement services are delivered in a professional manner consistent with training, policy, and law. The ability of the Sheriff’s Office to monitor compliance with policies or correct performance issues is essential in fostering employee accountability, improving safety, justifying appropriate employee actions, reducing liability, and preserving evidence for the purposes of criminal investigations.

The primary purpose of reviewing BWC footage will be to identify training deficiencies and to improve performance. Such reviews will also be utilized to ensure members are representing the values of the Sheriff’s Office through adherence to existing policies and procedures.

The Sheriff’s Office will continually review this policy to maintain effectiveness and adherence to local, State, and Federal laws, pursuant to Sheriff’s Office Policy and Procedures Section A-0200.

POLICY

REVIEW OF BWC RECORDINGS

1. Review of recordings is permitted for the following purposes:
 - a. By the deputy to make sure the BWC is working properly.
 - b. A deputy may review their own BWC recording(s) to assist with writing an investigative/supplemental report, memorandum, or prior to making a statement about the incident.
 - c. Prior to courtroom testimony.
 - d. By authorized persons to review evidence.
 - e. In the event of an officer involved shooting, use-of-force involving significant injury or death, or pursuit involving great bodily injury or death, the involved deputy shall have the option to review his or her BWC recording prior to being interviewed but through facilitation by detectives. A deputy shall not review his or

her BWC recording until such facilitation by detectives occurs. A deputy may have an employee representative present during the review of the BWC recording without detectives or supervisors present.

- f. In the event a deputy is involved in an officer involved shooting, use-of-force involving significant injury or death, or pursuit involving great bodily injury or death and they are not equipped with a BWC, their BWC is not activated during the incident, or their BWC recording is obstructed, that deputy may be permitted to view other available BWC footage if such viewing is deemed reasonable and appropriate by detectives.
 - g. To prepare for an Internal Affairs Unit investigation, to include reviewing the data with their representative, outside the presence of any supervisor or investigator.
 - h. By authorized Sheriff's Office personnel participating in an official investigation such as a personnel complaint, administrative inquiry, or criminal investigation.
 - i. For other reasons not specified, with permission of the Sheriff or designee.
2. By personnel assigned to the Body Worn Camera Unit in the performance of their duties as outlined in this policy.
 3. Field Training Officers and Detentions Training Officers and their supervisors may view BWC recordings to evaluate the performance of their trainees.
 4. Recordings may be used to provide formal training opportunities with notification made to the involved deputy prior to the training. If the involved Sheriff's Office personnel object to the use of the recording for training, they may submit a written request through their respective chain of command to contest the use of the recording. The commander will review the objection and determine if the objection outweighs the training value.
 5. In no event shall any recording be used or shown with the intent to ridicule or embarrass any employee or any member of the public.
 6. Employees shall not obtain, attempt to obtain, record, or convert for their personal use or for the unauthorized use of another person, any information obtained by the BWC system.

COPIES OF BWC SYSTEM RECORDINGS

1. Copies of a BWC recording will be used for official Kern County Sheriff's Office business only.
2. Only authorized employees may duplicate/copy video or audio files and only for legitimate law enforcement purposes.
 - a. Legitimate law enforcement purposes include; court testimony, for the court for evidentiary purposes or for investigative files.
3. Unauthorized duplication, copying, or distribution is expressly prohibited, and personnel who do so may be subject to disciplinary action. BWC recordings shall be safeguarded similar to other forms of evidence. All copies made and not booked into the Sheriff's

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Office Property Room/or used for administrative purposes will be marked for destruction in accordance with current County and Sheriff’s Office destruction policies. It is the responsibility of the person receiving the copy to comply with records retention as outlined in policy.

4. Employees shall not copy any recordings for any personal use or upload to any internet website or social networking sites without the express written authorization of the Sheriff.
 - a. Personal use includes making copies of video for court purposes. A deputy will not make a copy of video footage for the District Attorney’s Office or Defense Attorney.
 - i. There is a standardized procedure for requesting copies of video footage through the BWC Unit.

SUPERVISOR REVIEW

1. Supervisors may review BWC recordings for the following purposes:
 - a. For the purpose of investigating a specific act of employee conduct.
 - b. When completing a use-of-force review.
 - c. When BWC recordings are submitted with any report.
 - d. To conduct reviews of their deputies’ BWC recordings to ensure they are complying with DPPM J-3600 and this policy.
 - e. For the purpose of reviewing tactics and training to identify formal training opportunities, as outlined in Section 4 of the ‘Review of BWC Recordings’ section of this policy.

BODY-WORN CAMERA UNIT

The body-worn camera (BWC) unit will be responsible for reviewing footage beyond a supervisory review. Such reviews are for the purpose of increasing transparency, improving oversight and accountability, and enhancing support for deputies through policy revisions, training, and supervision. These reviews will be for the following reasons:

1. To identify exceptional performance and customer service
2. To ensure compliance with Sheriff’s Office policy and procedures.
3. To complete redactions and to provide recordings in compliance with this policy
4. To ensure a high level of professionalism between department members and the public
5. To identify training deficiencies or commend employees who demonstrate exceptional skill in employing CIT and/or De-Escalation Training.
6. To identify and address policy violations (Any discovery of policy violations will be addressed as provided in DPPM D-200 or DPPM D-300.)

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REQUESTS FOR BWC RECORDINGS

Pursuant to Government Code 6254 (California Public Records Act) in general, BWC video is considered a “law enforcement investigatory file” and does not require full disclosure to the public. Media requests will be processed through the Public Information Officer (PIO). BWC video that is subject to disclosure shall be edited and redacted, when necessary, in order to protect the privacy of people and places depicted in the video. Such editing, redaction, and release will be done by those authorized by the Sheriff or his designee.

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