



Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

BODY WORN CAMERAS

POLICY

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) is committed to creating transparency, ensuring accountability, and enhancing public trust by effectively using body worn cameras (BWC). The BWC system is designed to record law enforcement activity to preserve evidence used in criminal investigations, administrative investigations, civil litigation, and disciplinary actions. The BWC system may also be used to identify training, tactical, and policy improvements, and to address employee performance issues. IMPD employees will maintain and use the BWC system in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy and department training.

PROCEDURE

I. Operational Requirements

- A. Only a department-issued BWC will be worn by employees to record law enforcement activities.
- B. Employees assigned a BWC must wear the device while in uniform and performing patrol, traffic, or special service duties, including off-duty employment.
- C. BWC system must be worn in a holster designed for the BWC. This will ensure the BWC has a reasonable replication of the employee's sightline.
- D. Prior to being issued a BWC, employees must complete department BWC training regarding:
 1. The proper use and maintenance of the equipment,
 2. Placement of the device,
 3. Department policy of BWC usage, and
 4. Uploading procedures.
- E. Employees who supervise members issued a BWC, must also complete department training regarding the device.
- F. Employees must inspect and test their BWC equipment at the beginning of each shift by:
 1. Verifying the audio and video device is functioning,
 2. Confirming the BWC is fully charged,
 3. Confirming the holster sensor and Bluetooth device have an adequate power supply,
 4. Ensuring the device is properly worn,
 5. Documenting their information in the system (when required), and
 6. Depressing the status button on the Bluetooth device (if being used).
- G. Employees should periodically charge their BWC throughout their shift, when it is not in use.
- H. At the end of their shift employees will:



1. Charge their BWC and holster sensor, in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and department training.
 2. Ensure each recording is properly labeled for retention.
 3. Log out of AVaiLWEB to prevent unauthorized users from accessing the program.
- I. A BWC recording will not be used to replace a written report. Employees will complete detailed narratives and probable causes for reportable incidents pursuant to General Order 4.25 – *Incident Reporting*.
 - J. Supervisors use AVaiLWEB to monitor the number of unlabeled reports each shift, and remind officers to label them before the end of their shift.
 - K. Employees will notify their immediate supervisor, as soon as reasonably possible, when they discover an operational issue with a BWC that they cannot resolve. Supervisors will provide a replacement BWC, when necessary, and notify the BWC System Administrator to replace the malfunctioning device.

II. Activating the BWC System

- A. The BWC will automatically activate through:
 1. CAD integration when a dispatched officer is within approximately 500 ft. of dispatched runs,
 2. In-car trigger (e.g., light bar activation, siren activation, etc.), or
 3. When the employee
 - a. Goes into a prone position,
 - b. Begins running,
 - c. Begins rotational movement or change in orientations (e.g., begins to fight), or
 - d. Draws their handgun.
- B. The BWC can be manually activated or deactivated with the Bluetooth wrist device.
- C. If the BWC does not automatically activate, employees will manually activate the device in the following circumstances:
 1. Responding to dispatched calls, starting before the employee arrives on scene.
 2. During traffic or other investigative stops.
 3. Anytime lights and/or sirens are activated.
 4. Making an arrest or seizure.
 5. Questioning victims, suspects, or witnesses.
 6. During vehicle or foot pursuits.
 7. During a use of force incident or investigation.
 8. Immediately after being involved in a traffic accident.
 9. Prior to transporting any citizen (except those participating in a ride along).



10. During all searches of people, vehicles, or premises conducted with or without a warrant.
 11. When entering a private residence or business for law enforcement purposes.
 12. Any time the employee believes the recording would be appropriate and beneficial to department's operations.
- D. If an automatic trigger fails to activate, or if one of the above incidents is not recorded, the employee will notify their supervisor and complete a Blue Team. The Blue Team will include:
1. Which if any automatic triggers failed to activate the BWC, and
 2. Why the employee was unable to manually activate their BWC.
 3. The supervisor will send the Blue Team directly to the BWC System Administrator.
 4. The BWC System Administrator will review each of these Blue Teams to determine the cause of the failed activation and to take corrective or disciplinary actions to prevent further failures.
- E. When practical and safe, employees will inform citizens that their BWC is recording while the BWC is activated. If employees are unable to inform a citizen in a recording, they must explain why it was impractical or unsafe in the associated CAD or in an AVaiLWEB note.
- F. Employees will document the existence of BWC recordings in all incident reports and ECWS citations by stating, "This incident was recorded with a body worn camera" at the beginning of their narrative, probable cause, and/or UTT comments section.

III. Deactivating the BWC System

- A. Employees will continue recording until their involvement in the event ends (i.e., they mark in service) or the event is concluded, unless otherwise directed by this general order. The conclusion of the event occurs when:
1. All relevant communications with the public are concluded;
 2. The gathering of evidence is completed;
 3. Transportation and/or transfer of custody is completed; and
 4. The employee reasonably believes further recording will not capture pertinent activities.
- B. Employees will deactivate the BWC when their involvement in an event is concluded and prior to responding to another incident, when possible.
- C. If a citizen requests an employee stop recording during an event that is required to be recorded by policy, the employee will continue to record and explain to the citizen that Department policy requires the recording of the event.
1. If an employee is at a private residence (or other private property), **and** a citizen requests the cameras be turned off, **and** the employee has no other legal right to be there (e.g., warrant, exigent circumstance, etc.), **and** the interaction is not contentious or confrontational, **then** the employee will turn the camera off. (If the employee is only at that location because of the citizen's consent, then they can legally add stipulations to that consent)



2. The citizen's request to stop recording will be recorded on the camera prior to turning the video off.
 3. If the interaction becomes contentious or confrontational, the officer will resume video recording.
- D. Employees may deactivate the BWC when privacy concerns outweigh law enforcement interest, and the absence of the recording will not affect the investigation. This may include:
1. Natural death investigations,
 2. Child or sexual assault victim interviews,
 3. Cultural or religious objections to being recorded,
 4. Inside schools when children are present, and
 5. Circumstances where recording could impede or limit the cooperation of victims or witnesses.
- E. Employees will state on camera the reason for any breaks in recording and in the associated CAD or incident report.
- F. Employees who are involved in an officer-involved shooting, in-custody death incident, or other use of deadly force will continue recording until a supervisor is on scene.
1. When the scene is safe, the supervisor will order the officer to turn off their camera and immediately upload the recording.
 2. The supervisor will then take possession of the BWC and hold it as evidence until CIRT arrives to take over the investigation.

IV. Prohibited Use of BWC

- A. Unless for a necessary law enforcement purpose (e.g., crimes in progress), employees will not record in sensitive areas such as:
1. Restrooms, locker rooms, and dressing rooms;
 2. Detention facilities;
 3. Mental health, counseling, or therapeutic facilities; and
 4. Medical facilities.
- B. Employees will not record:
1. Strip searches,
 2. Tactical briefings,
 3. Coaching sessions,
 4. Union activities,
 5. Any privileged conversations (e.g., attorney and client, a doctor and patient, etc.),
 6. Courtroom proceedings, and
 7. People engaged in First Amendment activities (e.g., marches, protest, etc.) unless:



- a. The employee has probable cause to believe criminal activity is occurring, or
 - b. Imminent risk to public safety or property destruction appears likely.
- C. Employees will notify the BWC System Administrator if they record an undercover officer, a confidential informant, or any of the above events. The BWC System Administrator will flag those videos for proper redaction.
- D. Employees will not secretly record other department members, supervisors, city employees, or law enforcement officers pursuant to General Order 9.18 – *Eavesdropping / Unauthorized Recording*.

V. Uploading, Retention, and Dissemination of BWC Video

- A. Uploading of BWC recordings occur automatically when connected to the cloud-based storage system through the RocketloT, installed in department vehicles. If an officer does not have a working Rocketlot in their vehicle, they may upload their video to another employee’s Rocketlot.
- B. If no RocketloT is available, employees must report to a district headquarters or the IMPD garage within 24 hours to upload their recordings through a Waypoint available at those locations.
- C. All BWC recordings will be retained for a minimum of 190 days. The BWC System Administrator will be responsible for the retention and destruction of BWC recordings.
- D. All BWC recordings for administrative, civil, and criminal cases will be held until all potential legal proceedings and appeals have been exhausted.
- E. Detectives will review the recording of every criminal case they are assigned, and ensure the videos are labeled appropriately. Detectives will ensure recordings for their cases are kept until all appeals are completed.
- F. All BWC recordings are the property of IMPD. Dissemination outside of the department is strictly prohibited, except to the extent permitted or required by law, and only with written authorization from the Chief of Police, or designee, in consultation with the IMPD Legal Unit.
 - 1. Employees are prohibited from allowing unauthorized citizens or personnel to view recordings.
 - 2. Public requests for BWC recordings must be directed to:
 - a. The Indy.gov website at: <https://www.indy.gov/activity/request-a-public-record>, or
 - b. IMPD Citizen Services Office at: 317-327-3155.
- G. Employees will not record, copy, share, disseminate, or otherwise distribute any BWC recordings, by any means, unless for legitimate law enforcement purposes.
- H. Employees will not edit, alter, erase, tamper with, or delete BWC recordings. Any tampering with evidence will result in department discipline and possible criminal charges.

VI. Reviewing BWC Recordings

- A. Employees may review their own BWC recordings, and recordings shared by fellow officers, in preparation of any report, statement, or Blue Team entry unless compelled by a supervisor to make a public safety statement first.



- B. Employees must review their BWC recordings before:
 - 1. Completing a use of force Blue Team, or
 - 2. Testifying in court for a criminal case.
- C. Investigators may review BWC recordings, when necessary, for an official criminal or administrative investigation.
- D. Supervisors may review BWC recordings:
 - 1. Involving Blue Team reportable incidents,
 - 2. Related to an employee's on-duty injury,
 - 3. To help determine discipline when:
 - a. There is a complaint of misconduct, or
 - b. The supervisor witnessed misconduct.
- E. Supervisors are prohibited from reviewing BWC recordings for the sole purpose of searching for violations of department policy not related to a specific complaint or incident.
- F. FTO Specialists may review any recording of any employee on their district who is training in the FTO program, or in their probation year.
- G. Training Academy staff may review BWC recordings to assess its value for training purposes.
 - 1. Recordings may be shown for training purposes.
 - 2. Employees depicted in these recordings will be notified when they will be used for training.
 - 3. If an employee depicted in a recording objects to the recording being show for training purposes, they may send an inter-department to the Chief of Police stating their objection.
 - 4. The Chief of Police, or designee, will determine if the employee's objections outweigh the training value.
- H. The review of any BWC recordings must be done out of view of the public.
- I. The BWC System Administrator has access to all recordings and is responsible for:
 - 1. Marking recordings as confidential if they involve IA, SIU, or CIRT investigations; show SWAT tactics; or are of a sensitive nature.
 - 2. Ensuring that any recording released to the public is redacted according to Indiana State Law.
 - 3. Conducting a weekly audit of BWC recordings to ensure the devices and system are being operated and maintained according to policy and manufacturer recommendations. This audit will consist of reviewing at least ten randomly selected reports a week.
 - 4. The weekly audits will be compiled into a monthly report to be reviewed by the Deputy Chief of Performance and Policy.



VIII. Critical Incident Management

- A. AVaiLWeb offers Remote Activation and Live Streaming as tools to help manage critical incidents.
 - 1. Remote Activation allows designated users to turn on all cameras in a selected area, simultaneously.
 - 2. Live Streaming allows designated users to turn on and monitor live footage from an officer's activated camera.
- B. Police Chief, Assistant Chief, Deputy Chiefs; SWAT, ERG, and Homeland Security Commanders; and the BWC System Administrator will have access to these features.
- C. The use of this feature will be limited to monitoring high risk search warrants, SWAT operations, social disorder events, or where the use would be of value for officer safety, tactical, or operational purposes.
- D. Employees whose cameras may be affected by Remote Activation or Live Streaming will be notified prior to these features being activated.