

	Abbotsford Police Department Policy and Procedure	
	Operations	Investigation
	II.D.280	Body Worn Cameras

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POLICY

- (1) Abbotsford Police Department (“AbbyPD”) Officers may be issued Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) to record their interactions with the public in support of their

statutory and common law duties, in compliance with all applicable laws, and consistent with one or more of the purposes noted in paragraph (2).

- (2) The purpose of using BWCs is to seek to:
 - (a) further promote public safety and the well-being of the community;
 - (b) enhance transparency and trust between the community, AbbyPD employees and partner agencies;
 - (c) improve accountability for both the public and AbbyPD Officers; and
 - (d) help provide accurate and improved evidence collection for investigations.
- (3) BWC recordings will not be used for arbitrary, routine or general monitoring of Officer activity, but may form part of an internal or external investigation into identified employee conduct.
- (4) The Chief Constable may authorize the use of BWCs for specific categories of police interactions and by selected officers and policing units within AbbyPD.

Paragraphs (1) through (4) approved by the Police Board on April 23, 2025.

DEFINITIONS

- (5) For the purposes of the procedures under this policy:
 - (a) **Activate** – to put the BWC in a state that records Digital Evidence.
 - (b) **Body Worn Camera (BWC)** – a wearable video and audio recording system approved and issued by AbbyPD.
 - (c) **Buffering Mode** – the state in which the BWC is powered on but not Activated. In this mode, the BWC continuously saves a 30-second loop of video (no audio), which is retained only if the BWC is Activated.
 - (d) **DEMS Administrator** – the person assigned responsibility for managing BWC recordings uploaded to the DEMS.
 - (e) **Digital Evidence** – has the same meaning as noted in II.F.250 Digital Evidence Management System.
 - (f) **Digital Evidence Management System (“DEMS”)** – has the same meaning as noted in II.F.250 Digital Evident Management System.
 - (g) **Live View** – to live stream an Activated BWC so that the recording can be viewed in real time remotely on an approved application.
 - (h) **Officer** – an AbbyPD police officer or Operational Support Officer.

PROCEDURE

AUTHORIZED EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

- (6) Officers may only use AbbyPD-issued BWCs and mounts.¹
- (7) Officers may not use a BWC unless they have successfully completed AbbyPD-approved BWC operator training.²
- (8) Officers may be required to complete refresher training at periodic intervals. Refresher training may include, but is not limited to:
 - (a) effective use of the equipment;
 - (b) proper calibration and performance of the equipment; and
 - (c) notice of changes, updates, or other revisions to procedures, disclosure expectations and equipment.

DEPLOYMENT OF BWCs

- (9) Depending on BWC availability, Officers authorized to wear a BWC must, unless directed otherwise by a supervisor, wear a BWC during assigned uniform duties.
- (10) When an Officer deploys with a BWC, the Officer must:
 - (a) document in their notebook that they are deploying with a BWC;
 - (b) attach the BWC to their uniform in a manner that is readily visible to the public, and position it to capture an unobstructed recording view;
 - (c) ensure the BWC is in Buffering Mode and appears to be functioning properly; and,
 - (d) if the BWC appears not to be functioning properly, return the device to the docking cradle and send an email detailing the issue(s) observed to the IT Helpdesk.

NOTIFICATIONS OF BWC RECORDINGS

- (11) Unless doing so would put the safety of the Officer and/or the public at risk, Officers should make reasonable efforts to ensure that persons being recorded are informed as soon as practicable that they are being recorded³.

¹ BCPPS 4.2.1 (3)(a)

² BCPPS 4.2.1 (4)

³ BCPPS 4.2.1(11)

- (a) Officers should use the following standardized message when notifying a member of the public that they are being recorded, "I am rank/name and this interaction is being recorded."
- (12) AbbyPD recognizes that persons living in or with vulnerable circumstances may require additional explanation or notification to ensure they are aware that they are being recorded. See [II.B.310 Vulnerable Communities](#) for examples of such circumstances.

BWC ACTIVATIONS AND RECORDINGS

- (13) Officers equipped with a BWC must Activate their camera as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so:⁴
 - (a) when attending a call or responding to an incident where there is a reasonable belief that there will be use of force; or
 - (b) where violent or aggressive behaviour is anticipated or displayed;

For clarity, in exigent circumstances where a delay in acting would endanger human life or safety, activation of the BWC may be delayed. Officers are not required to Activate their BWC until safe and practicable to do so.

- (14) In addition to required BWC activations in paragraph (13), Officers should ordinarily Activate their BWC when in contact with a member of the public for the purpose of conducting an investigation⁵. Examples of such circumstances include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) initiating any contact with a member of the public for the purpose of a police investigation, including a traffic stop;
 - (b) While engaged in de-escalation or assisting in de-escalating a situation;
 - (c) entering a situation where a person has verbalized their intent to file a complaint;
 - (d) anticipating having to arrest or detain a person(s);
 - (e) providing a person(s) with their rights under Section 10(a) and (b) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
 - (f) conducting a witness or suspect interview where the use of the interview facilities is not practical or favourable;
 - (g) any circumstance where the Officer believes that the collection of otherwise imminently perishable evidence could be facilitated by

⁴ BCPPS 4.2.1(6)

⁵ BCPPS 4.2.1(7)

Activating the BWC (e.g., a large blood stain on a sidewalk visible on arrival but expected to diminish due to rain or other elements);

- (h) issuing a legal demand such as a breath demand; and
 - (i) the Officer believes capturing video and/or audio evidence would support the lawful execution of their duties.
- (15) However, Officers are to be mindful that use of a BWC can have significant privacy implications and, when deciding whether to Activate their BWC, are to weigh the law enforcement objective against possible privacy concerns, giving particular consideration to the following situations:
- (a) being in a dwelling house;
 - (b) being exposed to private health information and/or medical treatment being received;
 - (c) being in a law office;
 - (d) being in a place of worship;
 - (e) individuals being nude or having exposed private body areas (see [SOP 24-03 Jail Care and Control of Prisoners](#) for privacy principles applicable to a Strip Search. Exigent circumstances notwithstanding, care must be taken to not directly video record the prisoner's exposed body parts during a strip search; a second Officer may, however, video record the searching Officer's actions during the search);
 - (f) children or youth being present (regardless of whether a victim or subject of an investigation); and
 - (g) victims and/or witnesses being reluctant to cooperate when the BWC is Activated or requesting that Officers do not record in a sensitive situation (see paragraph (20)(d)(ii)).

Note: *the above does not preclude BWC recording in these circumstances.*
However, if safe and practicable to do so, extra steps should be taken to minimize privacy intrusion and mitigate the risk of unintentionally recording sensitive content. This could include moving the interaction to a private area to protect personal information.

- (16) Once the BWC has been Activated, it must be left on continuously without interruption until the incident is concluded (see paragraph (20)(a)(i)), unless there are exigent circumstances that warrant the BWC being switched to Buffering Mode (see [Decision to Switch to Buffering Mode](#)).⁶

⁶ BCPPS 4.2.1(8)

- (17) If required for Officer safety purposes, Officers may engage Stealth Mode in the following situations:
- (a) where the blinking light or sounds may contribute to an escalation in violent behaviour of a member(s) of the public;
 - (b) where the blinking light or sounds could give away the location of an Officer, where cover or concealment is necessary for their safety; or
 - (c) any other circumstance in which the blinking light or sounds could reduce the effectiveness of police tactics or investigative techniques or put the Officer or the public in danger.
- (18) While the BWC is Activated, Officers may, if practicable, verbalize elements of the situation that may not be readily visible (e.g., activity on the periphery of the incident, smells indicated at a scene such as liquor or chemicals).
- (19) If an Officer becomes aware of an incident that should have been recorded but wasn't, or they accidentally switched the BWC to Buffering Mode, or the BWC was found to have malfunctioned prior to the conclusion of an incident, they must articulate the details in a police file or in their notebook as soon as practicable, but no later than 12 hours of the end of their shift.⁷

DECISION TO SWITCH TO BUFFERING MODE

- (20) The BWC should be powered on continuously. Following Activation, the Officer should switch to Buffering Mode when they:
- (a) determine that the incident has concluded⁸;
 - (i) A matter may be considered "concluded" once continuation of the interaction is no longer required to:
 - advance a police investigation;
 - keep the peace;
 - protect public safety;
 - mitigate a police complaint (see paragraph (14)(c))
 - enforce the law.
 - (b) become aware that a recording is or has become a [prohibited action](#) listed in these procedures;
 - (c) become aware that they are engaging in a conversation containing privileged information (e.g. receiving legal advice from Crown Counsel; speaking with a Confidential Informer);

⁷ BCPPS 4.2.1(13)

⁸ BCPPS 4.2.1(9)

- (d) have a reasonable belief that recording is likely to compromise police tactical procedures or public safety, or inhibit their ability to effectively gather information (e.g., a victim or witness is reluctant to cooperate while a BWC is recording);
 - (ii) Switching to Buffering Mode is not a mechanism for extending privilege. Should the Officer opt to switch to Buffering Mode at the request of a reluctant victim or witness, the victim or witness must be advised that they are not speaking with police anonymously (i.e. confidentiality has not been extended).
 - (e) have a reasonable belief that the law enforcement objectives served by using a BWC do not outweigh the intrusion on an individual's privacy rights; or
 - (f) is directed to do so by a supervisor based on the factors set out above.
- (21) If a decision has been made to switch to Buffering Mode, the Officer should:
- (a) prior to deactivation, and if safe and practical to do so, state the time, place and reason for the switch to Buffering Mode; and
 - (b) note the details in the police file or in their notebook as soon as practicable, but not later than 12 hours of the end of their shift⁹.

POST-DEPLOYMENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BWCS

- (22) At the end of their shift, Officers with a BWC must:
- (a) confirm the BWC is in Buffering Mode;
 - (b) inspect the BWC for any visible defects that may impair its operation;
 - (c) document any malfunctions or defects observed in an email to the IT HelpDesk and label the BWC as "out of service"; and
 - (d) ensure the BWC is properly seated in the docking cradle
- (23) Prior to the end of their shift, Officers with a BWC must ensure that all recordings are uploaded and appropriately categorized (if applicable) in the DEMS.
- (a) If a GO, CAD call or violation ticket has been created, generally no "category" is required. The file or ticket number must be entered in the DEMS "ID number" field.
 - (b) A DEMS "category" must be added to the BWC recording in the following circumstances:

⁹ BCPPS 4.2.1(8)

- (i) “TRAFFIC STOP”: a traffic stop has been initiated and no violation ticket has been issued, or the stop otherwise results in no action; no DEMS ID number is required.
- (ii) “ACCIDENTAL CAPTURE”: an accidental recording has been created per paragraph (35); no DEMS ID number is required.
- (iii) “NFAR”: an intentional recording is created, but the event is subsequently determined to require no further action and no CAD call or GO created; no DEMS ID number is required.
- (iv) “PRIVATIZE”: the recording is to be restricted in its view, consistent with the rules for privatized records noted in II.F.250 Digital Evidence Management System; DEMS ID number is required.

The above categories may be applied prior to upload via the BWC or may be applied post-upload in the DEMS-approved application.

- (c) If applicable, apply a content warning to sensitive material in compliance with II.F.250 Digital Evidence Management System.

BWC RECORDINGS AND NOTETAKING

- (24) Officers will, as soon as practicable, make contemporaneous notes of all incidents. BWC recordings do not replace requirements for Officer notetaking and report writing.¹⁰

LIVE VIEW

- (25) A confirmed Sergeant or higher rank may initiate Live View on an Activated BWC for the purposes of overseeing operational activity (for example, critical incidents, assessing a scene and providing direction).
- (26) Exigent circumstances notwithstanding, Live View will not be initiated without the BWC wearer’s knowledge. When initiating Live View, the:
 - (a) BWC will emit a tone, and a purple light and the word “LIVE” will be indicated on the top of the BWC; and
 - (b) the supervisor will advise the Officer over the radio that Live View has been initiated.
- (27) Live View cannot be initiated when the BWC is powered off or in Buffering Mode.

¹⁰ BCPPS 4.2.1(14)

- (28) Live View is only initiated and viewable through an AbbyPD-approved application; access to the approved application is limited to authorized users.

VIEWING BWC RECORDINGS

- (29) BWC recordings may only be viewed in accordance with British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards (BCPPS) and in compliance with all applicable laws and AbbyPD policies and procedures. Viewing should be limited to investigative, training and internal audit purposes only.¹¹
- (30) Officers must complete their notes, police statement (PS) and if required, a Subject-Behaviour-Officer-Response (SBOR) report, before viewing a BWC recording of the same incident, but may add an addendum to their notes and/or supplemental PRIME page after viewing a BWC recording, using wording such as: *"Upon reviewing the BWC recording, I have made the following supplemental notes..."*. If the investigation will, or could potentially, lead to a Report to Crown Counsel (RTCC), any addendum must be captured in a PRIME text page.
- (31) Where viewing the BWC recording may compromise an investigation (e.g., may disclose sensitive information, the incident involves an Investigating external police agency such as IHIT, or may become part of an Independent Investigations Office investigation), the Officer should advise their supervisor and await further direction before taking any action.

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE OF BC (IIO)

- (32) If an Officer wearing a BWC is involved in an incident where the IIO asserts, or may assert, jurisdiction (see [SOP 24-15 Independent Investigations Office \(IIO\) Investigations](#) for reportable incidents), the Officer must advise the on-scene supervisor and await further direction before taking any action with respect to the BWC.
- (33) In all cases where the IIO has asserted jurisdiction, involved officers (including subject and witness officers) must not review any recording of the incident without the prior authorization of the AbbyPD IIO Liaison Officer.

PROHIBITED ACTIONS

- (34) Officers must not:
- (a) record any activity unless for a purpose identified in paragraphs (13) and (14);

¹¹ BCPPS 4.2.1 (17) and (18)

- (b) use a BWC for continuous or indiscriminate recordings, or routine interactions with the public;^{12, 13}
 - (c) deliberately cover the BWC camera lens while Activated;
 - (d) disable audio recording while a BWC is recording;
 - (e) disseminate images or recordings to any person or entity unless required by their duties and authorized by law;
 - (f) delete or alter a BWC recording^{14, 15}; or
 - (g) bring a BWC into a courthouse, unless attending to assist in an emergency situation and there is insufficient time to remove the BWC.
- (35) If an Officer becomes aware that they have made an unintentional BWC recording, they must:
- (a) switch the BWC to Buffering Mode;
 - (b) document the details in their notebook;
 - (c) categorize the recording as “ACCIDENTAL CAPTURE”; and
 - (d) advise the assigned DEMS Administrator by e-mail.
- (36) If an Officer has become aware that an interaction with a confidential informant has been recorded, the Officer must:
- (a) categorize the recording as “PRIVATIZE”; and
 - (b) advise the Human Source Unit (HSU) Coordinator as soon as practicable of the existence of the recording.

The Officer will follow HSU direction regarding the recording.

LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE

- (37) If a BWC is lost, stolen, or damaged, as soon as practicable:
- (a) the Officer last in possession of the BWC must notify their supervisor (see [I.G.020 Damaged or Lost Property](#));
 - (b) the supervisor advised under (a) must:
 - (i) notify the DEMS Administrator; and
 - (ii) if the BWC was or is suspected to have been lost or stolen in another jurisdiction, notify the Duty Officer;

¹² BCPPS 4.2.1(5)

¹³ BCPPS 4.2.1(3)(b)

¹⁴ BCPPS 4.2.1(10)

¹⁵ BCPPS 4.2.1(16)

- (c) the DEMS Administrator notified under (b) must notify the Manager, Records Disclosure.

EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT

Release of Recordings

- (38) BWC recordings may only be released in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). Without limiting release circumstances, BWC recordings may be released in accordance with established criteria for prosecution purposes, in response to an access request for information, pursuant to judicial authorization, or in accordance with lawful authority for disclosure of personal information. Release of records must be coordinated through the Disclosure and Privacy unit.¹⁶
- (39) If a BWC recording is requested under FIPPA, each request will consider all relevant information, including the presumption that third-party personal information will not be disclosed, and possible harm to ongoing police investigations. Generally, a BWC recording will not be disclosed under FIPPA while a police investigation is ongoing.

Retention of Recordings

- (40) BWC recordings will be automatically deleted after 13 months unless retained as evidence in relation to an offence or complaint or for training purposes¹⁷.
- (41) When required for an evidentiary purpose, the BWC recording will be retained in DEMS for the incident-specific AbbyPD PRIME retention period and deleted thereafter. Recordings that form part of an ongoing court case will be held until the conclusion of all court processes, regardless of their prescribed retention period¹⁸.
- (42) BWC recordings may be kept and used for training purposes provided:
 - (a) the BWC recording is no longer required for an investigation or proceeding (e.g., criminal or disciplinary procedures)¹⁹;
 - (b) prior authorization has been obtained from a Training Section NCO and the Manager, Records Disclosure;

¹⁶ BCPPS 4.2.1(18)

¹⁷ BCPPS 4.2.1(21)

¹⁸ BCPPS 4.2.1(20)

¹⁹ BCPPS 4.2.1(22)

- (c) all persons in the BWC recording have been anonymized or have provided written consent that the BWC recording may be used for training purposes²⁰,
- (d) consent under (c) is not sought:
 - (i) until the condition under (a) has been met²¹; and,
 - (ii) unless the purpose for which the BWC video will be used is explained in writing²²;
- (e) it is only retained for the duration that the recording remains relevant as a training aid.

Security and Access to BWC Video

- (43) The DEMS maintains an automated and immutable record of all persons, dates and times when BWC recordings are accessed and what actions the user took²³.

BWC Recording Transcripts

- (44) When an RTCC is submitted, the following must be included:
 - (a) a copy of all BWC recordings related to the incident;
 - (b) for in-custody files, all significant incidents (e.g. charter/warn, use of force, statements) “marked” in DEMS (Timeline/Evidence Marker Report);
 - (c) an audio transcript of all BWC recordings related to the incident (for an in-custody file, the transcript may follow at a later date);
 - (d) documentation of any disclosure concerns;
 - (e) list of all BWC recordings in the ‘Attachments List’; and,
 - (f) if necessary, additional notes in an addendum to the police file.
- (45) The BWC operator (Officer) must vet privileged material in consultation with the FOI and Disclosure Section and the DEMS Administrator (see [T21-002 Vetting Guidelines](#)).

INTERNAL AUDIT

- (46) A compliance review of random samples of BWC recordings will be conducted each year to assess compliance with these procedures, in particular, whether:

²⁰ BCPPS 4.2.1(23)

²¹ BCPPS 4.2.1(24)(a)

²² BCPPS 4.2.1(24)(b)

²³ BCPPS 4.2.1(19)

- (a) sampled BWC recordings comply with relevant AbbyPD policy and procedures²⁴;
- (b) BWC recordings are stored in compliance with II.F.250 Digital Evidence Management System²⁵;
- (c) unauthorized viewing of BWC recordings has occurred²⁶; and
- (d) BWC recordings have been deleted in compliance with paragraph (40)²⁷.

²⁴ BCPPS 4.2.1(25)(a)

²⁵ BCPPS 4.2.1(25)(b)

²⁶ BCPPS 4.2.1(25)(c)

²⁷ BCPPS 4.2.1(25)(d)