

**Forest Police Department
Law Enforcement
Policies and Procedures**

Subject: Body Worn Cameras	Policy Number: 7.16
Issue Date: April 22, 2016	Revision Date:
Approval Authority Title and Signature:	

I. BACKGROUND, SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- A. Body-worn cameras are an effective law enforcement tool that can reduce violent confrontations and complaints against officers. Body-worn cameras provide additional documentation of police-public encounters and may be an important tool for collecting evidence and maintaining public trust.
- B. This policy is intended to provide officers with instructions on when and how to use body-worn cameras.
- C. The Forest Police Department has adopted the use of body-worn cameras to accomplish several objectives, including:
 - 1. Body-worn cameras allow for accurate documentation of police-public contacts, arrests, and critical incidents. They also serve to enhance the accuracy of officer reports and testimony.
 - 2. Audio and video recordings enhance the Forest Police Department's ability to review probable cause for arrest, officer and suspect interaction, and evidence for investigative and prosecutorial purposes and to provide additional information for officer evaluation and training.
 - 3. Body-worn cameras may also be useful in documenting crime and accident scenes or other events that include the confiscation and documentation of evidence or contraband.
- D. The Forest Police Department recognizes that video images cannot always show the full story nor do video images capture and entire scene. The use of body-worn cameras does not reduce the requirement to provide thorough written documentation of an incident. Persons reviewing recordings must also be cautious before conclusions are reached about what the recordings show.

II. OVERVIEW

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- A. The body-worn cameras should be utilized to:
 - 1. Collect evidence that can be used in the prosecution of criminals,
 - 2. Record contacts with the public in order to secure unbiased evidence in connection with investigations.
 - 3. Allow for supervisory review to ensure that department policies and procedures are followed, and
 - 4. Capture footage that would be helpful for training.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Body-worn cameras are camera systems designed to be worn by police officers to capture digital multimedia evidence.
- B. Digital Multimedia Evidence or DME consists of all digital recordings, to include but not limited to audio, video, photographs, and their associated metadata. Metadata includes any digital identifiers that are captured as part of the actual recording, such as date/time, GPS coordinates, labeling, etc.

IV. LEGAL ISSUES

- A. Body-worn camera equipment and all data, images, video and metadata captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the property of the Forest Police Department. The personal use of body-worn cameras shall be prohibited.
- B. Use of body-worn cameras for any purpose other than in accordance with this policy is prohibited.
- C. All data, images, video and metadata captured by body-worn cameras are subject to state statutes and Forest Police Department's policies regarding the retention of records.

V. PROCEDURES

- A. Prior to using a body-worn camera, officers shall receive Department-approved training on its proper operation and care and the Department's policy with respect to the use of the body-worn camera. Additional training shall be provided at periodic intervals to ensure the continued effective use of the equipment, proper calibration and performance, and to incorporate changes, updated, or other revisions in policies or equipment.
- B. Body-worn cameras and equipment should be used with reasonable care to ensure proper functioning. Equipment malfunctions shall be brought to the attention of the officer's supervisor as soon as possible so that a replacement unit may be assigned. Officers shall inspect and test body-worn cameras prior to each shift to verify proper functioning, and shall notify their supervisor of any problems.
- C. In the event that a body-worn camera is lost, upon discovery the officer shall immediately notify his/her supervisor.

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- D. Officers shall wear body-worn cameras above the midline of their torso and in position designed to produce an effective recording.
- E. Officers shall transfer all video recordings from their body-worn cameras to the designated storage location at the completion of each shift.
- F. Officers shall not use personally-owned body-worn cameras while on duty.
- G. Officers assigned a body-worn camera may use the camera at approved secondary off-shift employment, but only in connection with their department duties. If used for this purpose, the officer shall download all DME during their next regularly assigned duty shift.

VI. OPERATION OF BODY-WORN CAMERAS

- A. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, officers shall activate body-worn cameras to record all contacts with citizens in the performance of official duties.
- B. Unless the interaction with a citizen is in an undercover assignment, whenever possible officers should inform individuals that they are being recorded. Officers have no obligation to stop recording in response to a citizen's request if the recording is pursuant to an investigation, arrest, lawful search or the circumstances clearly dictate that continued recording is necessary. However, officers may evaluate the situation and when appropriate, honor the citizen's request. The request to turn the camera off should be recorded, as well as the officer's response.
- C. Deactivation of the body-worn camera shall occur when:
 - 1. The event has concluded;
 - 2. Victim and/or witness contact has concluded;
 - 3. All persons stopped have been released;
 - 4. Once an arrested has been placed into a vehicle to be transported to a detention facility. However, the officer transporting the arrestee to the detention facility shall keep the officer's body-worn camera activated until custody of the individual is transferred to the detention facility.
- D. If an officer fails to activate a body-worn camera, or fails to record the entire contact, the officer shall document the reasons for doing so.
- E. Non-Department personnel shall not be allowed to review the recordings unless pursuant to written consent of the Chief.

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- F. Officers shall not be required to activate body-worn cameras when engaged in conversations with individuals with whom the officer is in a privileged relationship (e.g., spouse, attorney, minister, etc.).
- G. Officers shall not edit, alter, erase, duplicate, copy, share, or otherwise distribute in any manner body-worn camera images and information without the prior written approval of the Chief of Police or the Chief's designee or a court order.
- H. Officers shall be allowed to review the recordings from their officer-worn body cameras at any time. To help ensure accuracy and consistency, officers are encouraged to review recordings prior to preparing reports. If the officer is giving a formal statement about the use of force or if the officer is the subject of a disciplinary investigation, the officer shall:
 - 1. Have the option of reviewing the recordings in the presence of the officer's attorney or labor representative; and
 - 2. Have the right to review recordings from the other body-worn cameras capturing the officer's image or voice during the underlying incident.

VII. RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION OF DIGITAL MEDIA EVIDENCE

- A. The retention and destruction of DME shall be pursuant to state public records retention laws.
- B. All stored DME is subject to release in accordance with the state public records retention laws. Officers shall be provided with at least one week's notice of any public requests made to review DME from their body-worn cameras.

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