

20.17. PATROL VEHICLE/BODY CAMERAS

20.17.1. PATROL VEHICLE/BODY CAMERA POLICY

A policy to guide and regulate the Laurel Police Department in the use of Patrol Vehicle and Body Camera Equipment.

This section will dictate procedures and guidelines that must be followed in order for us to better protect and serve our citizens as well as any person or persons who may be found within our jurisdiction. Due to the nature of our profession, it has become necessary to adopt this video/audio recording policy. This will enable our supervisors and the Laurel Police Department's Administrative Staff to prove the facts when dealing with any allegations and complaints that are filed against our officers. It is imperative that this audio/video recording policy be strictly followed. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action against officers who fail to comply or deviate from this policy.

20.17.2. DAILY OPERATION OF PATROL VEHICLE CAMERAS

The Patrol Shift Supervisor (Lt.) or designee (Sgt.) will be responsible for the issue and retrieval of the video data cards to each member of their squad. The individual officer will be responsible for the installation and removal of the data card in the patrol vehicle camera system. In the event the camera system malfunctions and will not operate, the officer will immediately notify his/her supervisor who will arrange for the maintenance or repair of the unit. In the event that a video card runs out before the officer's tour of duty is complete, the officer will immediately notify his/her supervisor and a fresh card will be installed to complete the shift.

20.17.3. PATROL VEHICLE CAMERA STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Patrol Vehicle Camera will be activated during any vehicle pursuit, emergency (code 3) run, at any time anyone is placed in the rear seat of the patrol vehicle and at any time the officer feels the vehicle camera could be used to capture valuable video evidence.

Whenever an officer has a prisoner, suspect or any member of the public in the rear seat of the patrol vehicle, the rear-facing camera will be activated along with the vehicles audio equipment.

At the end of each shift, the supervisor will collect the officer's video data cards and turn them over to the Patrol division commander for review and disposition.

20.17.4. DAILY OPERATION OF PATROL BODY CAMERAS

Each Patrol officer of the Laurel Police Dept. will be assigned a Taser Axon body or flex camera which will be labelled with the officer's "B" number. These cameras will be kept in each shift's office and will be stored, when not in use, in a docking port. The docking port serves to upload all audio/video data captured by the device and as a battery charger.

While preparing for duty, each officer will retrieve his/her body camera from the docking port in his shift commander's office and will wear and utilize the body camera throughout the shift. At the end of the shift, the officer will place his/her body camera into a docking port for upload of data and recharge of the battery.

In the event an officer's body camera fails to operate or malfunctions, he/she will notify the shift commander immediately. If spare camera systems are available, any captain can temporarily assign a spare camera to the officer until such time as repair or replacement can be effected.

Turn in of cameras for repair/replacement will be made through the Training Division.

Officers will be held liable for any damage to, or loss of, body cameras, which occurs through Negligence on the part of the officer.

20.17.5. PATROL BODY CAMERA STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Officers assigned body cameras shall record all contacts with the public which are made while on duty in a law enforcement role. Meal breaks, restroom breaks, re-fueling vehicles etc. should not be recorded.

Unauthorized use, duplication, and/or distribution of police audio/video files are strictly prohibited.

Once activated, the recording shall not be intentionally terminated until the conclusion of the encounter.

Officers shall not use the body camera to record any personal conversation of or between another member/employee without the recorded member/employee's knowledge.

As the cloud based evidence system only retains data for 90 days, it shall be the responsibility of the patrol officer to download and burn to disk any audio/video data needed as evidence for court in misdemeanor cases. Video needed by the Criminal Investigation Division for use in felony prosecutions shall be downloaded and stored by the Criminal Investigation Division Commander. Video evidence needed for investigations of complaints against officers shall be downloaded and stored by the Patrol Division Commander.

At no time should an officer jeopardize his/her safety in order to activate a body camera.

Revised: 06/10/14