

# CITY OF PONTOTOC POLICE DEPARTMENT

## WRITTEN DIRECTIVE

**EFFECTIVE DATE: FEBRUARY 1, 2017**

### **SUBJECT: BODY-WORN CAMERAS (BWCs)**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

This policy is intended to provide officers with instructions on when and how to use body-worn cameras (BWCs) so that officers may reliably record their contacts with the public in accordance with the law.

#### **2. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Pontotoc Police Department that officers shall activate the BWC when such use is appropriate to the proper performance of his or her official duties, where the recordings are consistent with this policy and law. This policy does not govern the use of surreptitious recording devices used in undercover operations.

#### **3. PROCEDURES**

##### **A. Administration**

The Pontotoc Police Department has adopted the use of the BWC to accomplish several objectives. The primary objectives are as follows:

1. BWCs allow for accurate documentation of police-public contacts, arrest, and critical incidents. They also serve to enhance the accuracy of officer reports and testimony in court.
2. Audio and video recordings also enhance this agency'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. The BWC may also be useful in documenting crime and accident scenes or other events that include the confiscation and documentation of evidence or contraband.

**B. When and How to Use the BWC**

1. Officers shall activate the BWC to record all contacts with citizens in performance of official duties.
2. Whenever possible, officers should inform individuals that they are being recorded. In locations where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a residence, they may decline to be recorded unless the recording is being made in the pursuant to an arrest or search of the residence or the individuals. The BWC shall remain activated until the event is completed in order to ensure the integrity of the recording unless the contact moves into an area restricted by this policy (see items D.1-4).
3. If an officer fails to activate the BWC, fails to record the entire contact, or interrupts the recording, the officer shall document why a recording was not made, was interrupted, or was terminated.
4. Civilians shall not be allowed to review the recordings at the scene.

**C. Procedures for BWC Use**

1. BWC equipment is issued primarily to uniformed personnel as authorized by the Pontotoc Police Department. Officers who are assigned BWC equipment must use the equipment unless otherwise authorized by supervisory personnel.
2. Police personnel shall use only BWCs issued by this department. The BWC equipment and all data, images, video, and metadata captured recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the Pontotoc Police Department.
3. Police personnel who are assigned BWCs must complete an agency approved and/or provided training program to ensure proper use and operations. Additional training may be required at periodic intervals to ensure the continued effective use and operation of the equipment, proper calibration and performance, and to incorporate changes, updates, or other revisions in policy and equipment.
4. BWC equipment is the responsibility of individual officers and will 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 procured.

5. Officers shall inspect and test the BWC prior to each shift in order to verify proper functioning and shall notify their supervisor of any problems.
6. Officers shall not edit, alter, erase, duplicate, copy, share, or otherwise distribute in any manner BWC recordings without prior written authorization and approval of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
7. Officers are encouraged to inform their supervisor of any recordings that may be of value for training purposes.
8. If an officer is suspected of wrongdoing or involved in an officer-involved shooting or other serious use of force, the department reserves the right to limit or restrict an officer from viewing the video file.
9. Request for deletion of portions of the recordings (e.g. in the event of a personal recording) must be submitted in writing and approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee in accordance with state record retention laws. All request and final decisions shall be kept on file.
10. Officers shall note in incident, arrest, and related reports when recording were made during the incident in question. However, BWC recordings are not a replacement for written reports.

**D. Restrictions on Using the BWC**

BWCs shall be used only in conjunction with official law enforcement duties. The BWC shall not generally be used to record:

1. Communications with other police personnel without the permission of the Chief of Police;
2. Encounters with undercover officers or confidential informants;
3. When on break or otherwise engaged in personal activities; or
4. In any location where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a restroom or locker room.

**E. Storage**

1. All files shall be securely downloaded periodically and no later than the end of each shift. Each file shall contain information related to the date, BWC identifier, and assigned officer.
2. All images and sounds recorded by the BWC are the exclusive property of the Pontotoc Police Department. Accessing, copying, or releasing files for non-law enforcement is strictly prohibited.
3. All access to BWC data (images, sounds, and metadata) must be specifically authorized by the Chief of Police or his/her designee, and all access is to be audited to ensure that only authorized users are assessing the data for legitimate and authorized purposes.
4. Files should be securely stored in accordance with state records retention laws and no longer than useful for purposes of training or for use in an investigation or prosecution. In capital punishment prosecutions, recordings shall be kept until the offender is no longer under control of a criminal justice agency
5. The recorded media from the BWC will be retained in evidence for sixty (60) days from the last date on the BWC date tag. After the time has lapsed the departments' authorized agent will erase the media from storage unless media is to be used for evidentiary purposes.
6. Any person making an authorized request for a copy of an incident captured and stored from BWC will be charged a \$50.00 administrative fee to cover cost of recording disk and time used to perform task by the administrator or his/her designee.
7. Only that recorded video of the requested incident will be copied. The original media will be retained by the agency and handled in accordance with all applicable department evidence policy or court orders.

**F. Supervisory Responsibilities**

1. Supervisory personnel shall ensure that officers equipped with BWC devices utilizes them in accordance with policy and procedures defined herein.
2. At least on a monthly basis, supervisors will randomly review BWC recordings to ensure that that the equipment is operating properly and that officers are using the devices appropriately and in

accordance with policy and to identify any areas in which additional training or guidance is required.