

**BODY WORN CAMERA****PURPOSE**

The purpose of this directive is to establish a policy regarding the use of department issued body worn cameras and to establish a policy regarding the storage, release, and retention of information captured by the Taser Axon Flex Body Worn Camera.

**POLICY:**

It shall be the policy of the Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Department to utilize the Body-Worn Camera (BWC) equipment to document law enforcement interaction with the public with video and audio recordings. Through the use of mobile recording systems, this agency will better protect the rights of citizens and police officers while balancing privacy interests.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Body-Worn Camera (BWC):** A recording system that captures audio and video that is individually worn by officers and includes, at a minimum, a camera and recorder.

**Buffering:** Is the thirty seconds of video prior to activation of the BWC event mode held in temporary storage.

**Meta Data:** This is information that is typed in by the officer that identifies each recording. This information at a minimum consists of the ID Number (CRN), Title and Category.

**Evidence Transfer Station:** A docking station that recharges the Axon Tactical Computer (ATC) while uploading to Evidence.com all data captured from the BWC operator's point of view during the operator's shift.

**Evidence.com:** The online web-based digital media storage facility accessed at [www.evidence.com](http://www.evidence.com). The virtual warehouse stores digitally-encrypted data (photographs, audio and video recordings) in a highly-secure environment.

**Mobile Video System Administrator(s):** Department member(s) with full administrator rights who assigns and tracks equipment, controls passwords, acts as liaison with Taser Axon representatives and is the department's subject matter expert on all body-worn devices.

**I. PROCEDURE****A. Officer Responsibilities**

1. Officers assigned a BWC shall fully-charge their BWC system prior to their tour of duty.
2. Inspections and maintenance of the BWC shall be the responsibility of the officer assigned that system.
3. Only authorized personnel to whom a recording system is assigned may use, touch or handle that recording system.
  - a. Exchanging BWC system parts (including batteries) with other issued system is prohibited, unless authorized by the System Administrator(s).
  - b. Unauthorized personnel shall not use, touch or handle any recording system.
4. If any part of the BWC is lost, broken or becomes non-functional it shall be reported to their supervisor and to the Mobile Video System Administrator(s) immediately, to get the system or part functional, as soon as possible.

5. In order to best capture that which is observed by an officer using a BWC, the camera should be located as close to the eyes as possible. Using an approved Taser mounting option.
  6. Officers shall activate the BWC whenever there is a potential for dealing with a suspect of a crime.
    - a. This would include, but is not limited to; traffic stops, suspicious person's contacts, or calls for service.
  7. The BWC may be activated whenever the officer feels its use would be beneficial to his/her police duties.
  8. Once the camera is activated to the "event" mode, it shall remain on until the police action is complete.
  9. At the end of an officer's tour of duty, the recording system will be placed into the assigned docking station slot on the Evidence Transfer Station located within their assigned Pct/Unit; or, recordings shall be uploaded as otherwise directed by authorized personnel.
  10. The recording system should not be removed from the Evidence Transfer Station until all of the data has been uploaded and the battery has been fully charged.
  11. Any functionality or serviceability problem shall be reported to the Mobile Video System Administrator immediately.
- B. Documentation
1. The officer shall input the Meta Data to identify each recording immediately after each call or criminal investigation. All recorded evidence must have the appropriate meta data added prior to docking the BWC for upload. The Meta Data includes at a minimum:
    - a. ID Number (CRN or Citation Number)
    - b. Title (Same as the Incident Report "Nature of Call")
    - c. Category (choose appropriate choice from drop down menu)
  2. The Meta Data information window may be accessed by attaching the camera to any of the following devices by auxiliary cable (supplied with system) or accessing the information after it has downloaded:
    - a. Smart Phone (AXON Mobile App),
    - b. MDT (Evidence Sync) or
    - c. Pct/Unit PC (Evidence Sync)
  3. When an officer activates the BWC it shall be documented in; the Incident Report, Supplemental Report, Accident Report, Citations or any other written documentation required by this department, where knowledge of the activation of the BWC is pertinent.
- C. Fourth Amendment Notice
1. An officer who is lawfully present in an area protected by the Fourth Amendment shall activate the BWC when there is reasonable suspicion that; a crime is being committed, has been committed, or is about to be committed, or that evidence of a crime is present.

- a. As a reminder, entry into a Fourth Amendment protected area requires probable cause and a warrant or warrant exception.
  2. In the absence of such criteria, the officer must turn off the BWC if asked to do so by a person with apparent authority over the constitutionally-protected area.
- D. Restrictions
  1. Using a mobile video recording system to take a statement in lieu of a sworn written statement, unless approved by a supervisor.
  2. Video-recording undercover officers or confidential informants.
  3. Duplicating or distributing recordings for other than official law enforcement purposes
  4. Permitting citizens to review recordings for other than official law enforcement purposes.
  5. Altering captured data.
  6. Accessing recordings for other than case-related purposes, responses to resistance, formal or informal complaints, legal review, pursuant to established policy or as directed by the Chief of Police or designee.
  7. Making or creating, by separate device or otherwise, a copy of any recording except as directed by the Chief of Police or designee.
  8. Posting to social media sites without approval by the Chief of Police.
  9. Monitoring officer performance through random review
  10. Unless authorized by the Chief of Police or designee, employees will not record other employees who are performing administrative or non-enforcement activities/actions without their knowledge.
    - a. Examples of such administrative or non-enforcement activities/actions include, but are not limited to:
      - 1) Meetings/roll calls (strategy, tactics, etc...), supervisor directives, disciplinary actions or topics of a confidential nature are discussed.
    - b. Any violation of this section of the general order will result in disciplinary action, as directed by the Chief of Police or designee.
- E. Dissemination
  1. Evidence.com's digital records are accessible only to authorized personnel.
    - a. The system maintains an audit of user activity.
  2. All digital media collected using the mobile video recording systems is public record as defined in O.C.G.A.
    - a. Public records requests shall be handled pursuant to ADM-003 Public Records.
  3. Accessing, copying, or releasing any recordings for other than official law enforcement purposes is strictly prohibited, except as required by law.
  4. Only the following will be granted duplication rights, as authorized the Chief of Police (or designee).
    - a. Mobile Video System Administrator(s) - (for training purposes)
    - b. Specific personnel within the Criminal Investigation Division (CID), to be identified by the CID Bureau Commander.

- c. Specific personnel within the Internal Affairs Unit, to be identified by the Internal Affairs Commander
  - d. Specific personnel within the District Attorney's Office, to be authorized by Chief of Police (or designee).
- F. Retention
- 1. Recordings shall be retained as established in Georgia public records retention laws, federal, state or local laws.
  - 2. Retention lengths will be displayed in the drop down menu of Category section of the Meta Data.
- G. Mobile Video System Administrator(s)
- 1. The Mobile Video System Administrator(s) is responsible for overall maintenance, management, training and retention, and acts as a liaison to City of Savannah's IT Department, CID/Forensics Unit and associated vendors. The Mobile Video System Administrator reports to the Special Operations Division Commander.
- H. Training
- Officers shall be trained and instructed prior to being assigned a Body Worn Camera system.

This Order supersedes and replaces all other written directives issued prior to 01/16/2015 pursuant to Body Worn Cameras.

**BY ORDER OF:**  
  
**Original Signature on File**  

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**Joseph H. Lumpkin Sr.**  
**Chief of Police**