

Transcript: Body-Worn Camera Programs— Training Perspective

Sgt. Dan Gomez, Officer in Charge, Tactical Technical Section, LAPD: In developing a training program for the Los Angeles Police Department, we really first took a look at, operationally, how do our officers deploy and how does the technology of body-worn cameras really integrate into their daily operations without hampering or inhibiting what they already do today. Certainly, officer safety in tactics is always number one, so as we looked at how we develop our training, we ensured that it seamlessly integrated into how they do daily operations.

When you're considering how to train your officers for body-worn cameras, one of the things that we found extremely effective was to utilize the same officers who both tested the body-worn cameras, who helped develop the policy, and who had daily interactions with the officers during our pilot program. This really gave continuity as we deployed forward, in terms of training, and it gave the officers who were doing the training a high degree of confidence in the subject matter, and that translated to the officers that ultimately were deploying the technology.

When trying to gain adoption by officers in the field in using body-worn cameras, one of the things that we found here in the Los Angeles Police Department was that we need to educate our own officers on what the cameras could do, what they couldn't do. Once we overcame those barriers, the officers were able to absorb the training and practically apply using body-worn cameras into their daily operations.

So as part of our deployment of body-worn cameras, we realized that not only did we have to get officer feedback, but we had to go into the community and get the community feedback from stakeholders, both from folks from civil liberty interests, as well as local leaders, both in our city government as well as church organizations and groups that just had a vested interest in what happens in the City of Los Angeles. And certainly by having public forums, by reaching out directly, having one-on-ones, and also having group discussions, it helped guide our policy and our decision to deploy body-worn cameras.

I think the biggest takeaway that I heard from the community was their overwhelming support of the Los Angeles Police Department utilizing body-worn cameras and recording the entire incident. They were very clear that they felt that the body-worn camera would be beneficial both to the community and to the officers, and felt that having the camera on during the entire incident was important to them. And I think what we also found during the community meetings was that it really opened a secondary dialogue. Not only did we talk about body-worn cameras, but that discussion between the police department and the community opened up discussions about a lot of other issues within the community that they want to talk to the police department, and that fosters the communication between the police and the community.