



# San Francisco State University

## Police Department



San Francisco State University Police Department (UPD) has equipped its uniformed patrol officers with body-worn cameras (BWC). The use of BWCs benefits members of the SF State community and UPD by increasing accountability and transparency while strengthening the trust with the community that UPD has the pleasure of serving.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is a BWC and where do officers mount it?

- A body worn camera is a small camera mounted on the uniform of a police officer, which objectively records interactions between law enforcement officers and the community.
- The cameras are mounted on the officer's chest facing forward.

### Who wears BWCs?

- On-duty uniformed UPD officers, corporals, sergeants and command staff.

### What body-worn camera system does UPD use?

- The department is using Axon's body-worn camera system to capture video and its cloud-based video management system (VMS) at Evidence.com to manage the videos captured. To learn more about the camera, VMS or related products, visit [www.axon.com](http://www.axon.com).

### Why are UPD officers wearing BWCs?

- Using BWCs is becoming an industry standard. Police departments nationwide have adopted BWCs for their departments. Benefits of wearing BWCs include:
  - Greater transparency
  - Promotes accountability
  - Evidence collection
  - Deters criminal activity and uncooperative behavior
  - Assists officers with completing reports and providing testimony in court

### When do officers record with BWCs?

- Responding to calls for service
- When officers have community contacts initiated pursuant to a law enforcement investigation
- Investigating possible criminal activity
- To deter criminal activity during police and community interaction

### **How do I know if I am being captured on video?**

- The camera worn by officers are clearly visible. If the officer is taking law enforcement action and is wearing a BWC, you can assume they have activated the video. You may also ask the officer if the video is activated.

### **Are officers required to tell community members they are being video recorded?**

- Officers are not required to tell community members they are being recorded.

### **Are there places where officers cannot use BWCs?**

- Typically, officers do not record in places where there is an expectation of privacy such as restrooms, locker rooms and medical patient care areas — unless there is reasonable suspicion a crime is being committed or the location is material to an investigation.
- There may be times when officers should be sensitive to a situation and use discretion on their decision to record contacts while handling certain calls for service. Some examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Interviewing sexual assault survivors
  - Recording in hospitals when other patients who are not related to a police incident could be recorded
  - When a hospital staff member requests that no videos are recorded

### **Can an officer record inside a private residence?**

- Yes, under the following circumstances:
  - When there is a valid warrant
  - When there is consent from the resident
  - When the officer is acting in their official capacity inside the residence

### **What about my privacy?**

- The courts have long held that an individual has no expectation of privacy in a public place. It is also true that if an officer has a legal right to be somewhere, they can also capture video. This includes private property. Concern for your privacy is also why we carefully guard the release of captured videos.

### **What happens to a video once it is recorded?**

- At the end of each shift, officers upload the data to a cloud-based service to store the files. Depending on the type of video captured, data is saved for a minimum of two years or as otherwise required by the California State University Records/Information Retention and Disposition Schedule.

### **Can anyone edit the video?**

- The original version of the video cannot be edited by anyone, including system administrators.

- Redacted copies of the videos to blur people/objects, remove audio and narrow the video to relevant sections can be created by authorized users. The original version of the video remains unchanged.

#### **Can anyone delete a video?**

- Videos can be deleted either through an automated retention system based on the type of incident recorded or manually by a system administrator.
- Manual deletions are only done after a criminal case is adjudicated in a court of law or if a recording was accidentally made in a location restricted by policy, such as a restroom.
- Manual deletions of accidental recordings require command staff approval.

#### **Who can obtain a copy of the BWC video?**

- The release of recordings to any person shall be made in accordance with current department policy and procedures, and pursuant to requirements of applicable law including but not limited to the California Records Act.

#### **What is the process for obtaining a copy of a BWC video?**

- These types of requests need to be made in compliance with the Public Records Act and approved by the Chief of Police.

#### **Why shouldn't all videos recorded by police be made available to the public?**

- One of the most critical issues for people interacting with police is privacy. People often seek police assistance when they are going through difficult personal challenges. Certain groups of citizens have strong specific privacy protections — particularly juveniles. Victims also have privacy protections in the law, in particular to protect them from the offender. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for law enforcement records was developed for paper documents and never contemplated the complexities of protecting privacy in video and audio recording.

#### **How does the BWC program increase police accountability if the public cannot see the videos?**

- Videos increase accountability for everyone involved by recording interactions from start to finish and being available to those involved in the incident, partners in the criminal and civil justice system and any government agency that investigates the police.

#### **What is the official BWC policy of UPD?**

- [UPD General Order 3-53](#)
- [CSU-wide policy](#)