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# BODY CAMERA SURVEY RESULTS

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## Overview

In August 2022, the Olympia Police Department will launch the use of body-worn cameras on all its officers, followed by in-car video systems in mid-2023. The purpose of this change is to increase transparency, enhance accountability and capture opportunities for officers to learn and improve.

The Olympia City Council, OPD, and community members have long supported the implementation of body-worn cameras, and had already been taking steps to understand the legal, funding, privacy, and other considerations associated with incorporating the technology.

State legislation enacted last year (HB 1223), combined with new funding made available by City Council have made it possible to move forward.

In preparation for integrating cameras into the Department, OPD is developing a policy to govern the use of the cameras and the management of collected video and audio content. The policy will reflect state legislative requirements, industry best practices, community input, and recommendations from the City of Olympia Police Auditor.

As part of the policy development process, the Department requested input from the community to ensure implementation of body-worn and in-car cameras is equitable, inclusive, and addresses the needs and concerns of our community.

## Input Collection

Community input was collected through a community-wide survey on the City's *Engage Olympia* website. The Department designed the survey specifically to educate community members about body-worn and in-car cameras, and seek input on areas in which the City has influence or flexibility in how the newly adopted state legislation is enacted.

- The survey was launched May 11, and closed May 25, 2022.
- 114 responses were received.

The survey included the following four questions:

**Question 1:** Are there other circumstances when the City might consider waiving the redaction fee?

**Question 2:** Are there other concerns or questions that OPD should be considering in implementing body-worn and in-car camera systems?

**Question 3:** Are there other populations in our community or other circumstances we should consider where OPD should take extra care or use additional methods to inform someone that they are being recorded?

**Question 4:** In general, what questions might you have about implementing body-worn cameras and/or what information about the implementation might be important to share with the community?

## High-Level Summary of Community Input

The following is a high-level summary of the input collected from responses to the community-wide survey through May 25.

- It's important to recognize that this update is only meant to provide a window into what has been submitted.
- Items below are listed in alphabetical order and do not reflect intensity or weight.
- As much as possible, the input is presented in the words used by survey respondents; however, not all individual comments are reflected here.

### Summary of Survey Responses

**Question 1:** Are there other circumstances when the City might consider waiving the redaction fee?

- After large scale disturbances/protests.
- Establish a fee support structure that ensures timely and cost-effective redactions.
- For boards, commissions and other organizations investigating alleged police misconduct.
- For low income individuals.
- For members of the press, ACLU, and research organizations.
- For persons and/or their representatives (family members, attorneys, therapists, health care providers, insurance agents, etc.) who are directly involved in an incident or in a civil case associated with an incident.
- For State commissions and non-profit organizations representing marginalized groups and/or promoting social justice and civil rights.
- Never charge a fee.
- When a person in the recording is not directly involved in an incident (bystander).

**Question 2:** Are there other concerns or questions that OPD should be considering in implementing body-worn and in-car camera systems?

- Consider how long and how much footage should be held, and who should have access to the footage.
- Consider the full scope of privacy protections for citizens – especially minors, people in abusive situations, mental health/addiction crises, and/or compromising positions.
- Don't release recordings to the public until after the incident is settled in court.
- For safety reasons, camera recordings of victims and witnesses should not be released to the public without permission.
- Have consequences for officers turning off, disabling or obscuring cameras.
- Inform those being recorded, using both deaf and spoken language interpretation.
- Redact sensitive HIPPA information on EMS/Fire calls.

**Question 3:** Are there other populations in our community or other circumstances we should consider where OPD should take extra care or use additional methods to inform someone that they are being recorded?

- Contact parents or caregivers when dealing with minors or people with mental disabilities.
- Every interaction between police and the public should be recorded, and every interaction should start with police explaining that they are being recorded using multiple methods.

- Extra care should be used when entering homes, private businesses, and/or private areas.
- Extra care should be used with minors, the elderly, BIPOC, neurodivergent, disabled, unhoused, and those under the influence.
- Extra care should be used with victims of accidents, domestic abuse, sexual assault, violence
- In high-stress, trauma situations, people may not be able to hear or understand a notice that they are being recorded.
- Informing a community member they are being recorded should not be prioritized in cases that would jeopardize the safety of community members or law enforcement officers.
- Make a broad, blanket public notice via the media that all police interactions will be recorded.
- Notification is not the same as asking permission. OPD is not asking permission, and the notification should make this clear.

**Question 4:** In general, what questions might you have about implementing body-worn cameras and/or what information about the implementation might be important to share with the community?

- Are there any circumstances when camera footage will be kept from the public?
- How long will footage be stored before it is deleted?
- How strict will the activation/deactivation policies be enforced?
- How will you handle egregious and abusive uses of the Public Disclosure Act to gain access to videos that individuals/groups have no relation or relevance to the event?
- What activity/services will be dropped to account for the staffing time needed to process video requests?
- What are the layers of security to protect footage?
- When police are in operation and cameras are activated, how is patient HIPPA information being protected under EMS/fire/hospital settings?
- Who has access to view or delete recordings?

## What We Are Hearing

There are four general themes that cut across all questions to varying degrees. They are listed in random order and do not reflect intensity of experiences, perceptions, or responses.

1. Concerns about privacy
2. Questions and concerns about video and audio recordings and public disclosure requirements.
3. Protecting minors and members of marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, People of Color, individuals with disabilities, and others.
4. Officer accountability for turning off, obstructing, or disabling cameras.

## Potentially Actionable Items

Listed below are potentially actionable items that were specifically noted by survey respondents. These items are shared here as informational and may or may not be able to be acted upon or integrated into the final Department policy.

- Have cameras be clearly visible, and make it obvious when they are recording.
- Have easily interpreted picture cards, signs, decals, etc., available for those who are hearing impaired, non-vocal, or are non-English speakers.

- Have written information available in various translations.
- Officers should learn to say "this is being recorded" in the most frequent languages/ASL.
- Make the process for obtaining body-worn camera footage clear and readily available.
- Share positive stories about the use of body cameras.
- Create a dashboard showing the reasons why cameras were turned off, frequency, and duration.
- Provide regular reports on redaction fees and fee waivers to ensure transparency.
- Have an independent study track the usefulness of cameras with attention to civil rights concerns.
- Have a non-partisan panel review the first year's experience and offer suggestions for improvement.