

Security

Last Updated: July 18, 2019

There are many factors that go into data security, most of which are technical matters outside of the scope of departmental policies. However, some departments have laid out procedures to prevent officers from tampering with or improperly releasing video.

“Does viewing require allowed purpose?” “Is viewing logged?” and “Is permission required to copy video?”: The question of who is allowed to watch the videos is not limited to the issue of public access. The history of dashboard cameras in police cars includes instances of videos being watched and distributed by police officers as entertainment. A system that limits when a video can be viewed or copied, and logs any activity with a username, can help prevent such abuses. We have noted the circumstances under which an officer can view the video, whether viewing is logged, and whether permission is required to copy it.

City	Does Viewing Require Allowed Purpose?	Is Viewing Logged?	Is Permission Required to Copy Video?
Arlington, TX	Not allowed to access recordings without proper approval. Viewing allowed to randomly review footage to ensure the system is working, identify areas in which additional training might be required, and if an officer involved in an incident is required to make a statement about said incident.	Not specified	Yes, prior approval of Police Chief or their designee is required.
Atlanta	Officers are permitted to access and review their own BWC footage stored on their BWC or the uploaded footage on the storage network, except for all use of force incidents.	Yes	Cannot share or provide video copies with any members of the public.
Austin	Viewing allowed to ensure the system is working; to write a report, review evidence, or investigate an act of employee conduct; or as part of an official investigation.	Not specified	“Employees shall not make personal copies” of BWC footage.

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<u>Baltimore</u>	Supervisors can view to monitor individual performance, training, investigations and advancing the best interest of the public. Members of OPR and CAPD can view. Everyone else must get authorization from the BWC Coordinator and must be for law enforcement purposes.	Yes	Supervisors and members of OPR and CAPD can copy videos. All other access to video must be authorized by the BWC Coordinator.
<u>Boston</u>	Viewing allowed for completing an investigation, preparing official reports, preparing for court and providing a statement. Non-BWC officers can view footage if their request is approved by the Commander of the Video Evidence Unit.	Yes	“Department personnel shall not copy or otherwise reproduce any BWC recording/footage (including using an iPhone, iPad, or other electronic or other device).”
<u>Charlotte, NC</u>	Viewing allowed only for “approved departmental purposes” such as writing reports and auditing system. Sworn employees can review their BWC video when completing statements for investigations, incident reports and preparing for court testimony.	Yes	Sworn employees prohibited from making copies. Exceptions: the court liaison unit can make copies for the district attorney or court, the homicide unit can copy for investigations with permission from sergeant., in-service training unit can copy for use in training purposes, and BWC compliance, policy administrator and agency system administrator can create release copies as directed by the court.
<u>Chicago</u>	No restrictions if viewing own video.	Yes	Yes
<u>Cincinnati</u>	“Officers may view BWC footage at the district utilizing vendor-approved software and equipment or on any computer with internet capability. Viewing of BWC footage is for official use only.”	Yes	Yes

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<u>Cleveland</u>	Yes, officers can only review videos for law enforcement purposes and there are limits on viewing recordings of use of force incidents.	Yes	Yes
<u>Dallas</u>	Accessing recordings without proper approval is prohibited, but no details on when or why approval is granted.	Not specified	Copies for training can be used with permission of Training Division Commander. Hard copies only used for criminal evidence, internal affairs division requests, Public Information Act requests and approvals by Division Commanders.
<u>Denver</u>	Officers able to review their own BWC recordings for accurate statements and when preparing written documentation. Officers can only review recordings from their own BWCs. Exceptions: When officers are involved in or witness to critical incidents or force incidents they must wait for authorization.	Yes	Yes. Lead investigators can make a single copy to attach to a case file and evidence may be shared with the District and City Attorney's Offices upon written request. Other copies require written permission from the Chief of Police.
<u>Ferguson</u>	Officers can view their own footage, along with Department-authorized users.	Not specified	Copying video is strictly prohibited unless required by law or the BWC policy.
<u>Jacksonville</u>	"Officers shall be allowed to review only their own BWC recordings when not otherwise prohibited, upon his own initiative or request..." and all others must receive written approval from BWC System Administrator or their designee before viewing footage.	Yes	Officers are prohibited from making copies of videos – need written approval from the Sheriff or designee.
<u>Las Vegas</u>	Viewing allowed for conducting investigations, completing reports, prior to testimony, and providing a statement in internal investigations.	Yes	Sheriff or designee must give permission in writing.
<u>Los Angeles</u>	No, officers are required to review BWV recordings on their devices prior to documenting incidents,	Not specified	"Officers shall not copy... recordings except as authorized by law or Department policy."

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	arrests, interviews etc.		
Mesa, AZ	Recordings should only be accessed for “official law enforcement purposes.” Officers can review footage for investigations, completion of reports, training and prior to making statements. Cannot review footage of incidents resulting in death/serious injury without approval of Homicide Unit Sergeant or designee.	Not specified	Recordings should only be copied for “official law enforcement purposes.” No permission process is specified.
Minneapolis	Officers can view video for any specified law enforcement purpose, as authorized by the Commander of the Technology and Support Services Division.	Yes	Officers and outside agencies must submit request to the Records Information Unit for a copy.
New Orleans	Viewing is prohibited other than for “official law enforcement purposes.”	Not specified	Not specified, though copying is prohibited other than for “official law enforcement purposes.”
New York	No restrictions on officer viewing own video. Officers may view others’ videos “in furtherance of an investigation, preparation of a case or other official purpose.”	Yes	Not specified, though copying is prohibited except for “official purposes.”
Oakland, CA	Officers can view their own recordings and supervisors can view officer recordings unless prohibited by policy.	Not specified if logged by system, but personnel shall document reason for access.	No. Authorized personnel can make copies but must document the reason.
Orlando	Yes. Viewing is prohibited other than for “official law enforcement purposes.”	Yes	Not specified, though copying is prohibited other than for “official law enforcement purposes.”

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<u>Philadelphia</u>	Yes, officers may access their own BWC footage for “report writing, court preparations, and/or training purposes.”	Yes	Yes, permission is required from the Digital Evidence Custodian, who manages and maintains all media and recordings from BWCs.
<u>Phoenix, AZ</u>	No restrictions on officer viewing own video or subordinate’s video.	Not specified	Copying recordings without the approval of the Police Chief or his designee is prohibited, but no permission process is specified.
<u>Rialto, CA</u>	Once uploaded, “personnel may view their own audio/video data.” In addition, “an employee” (which employee/s not specified) may view files for criminal investigations & reports, before testimony, or before providing a statement pursuant to an administrative inquiry.	Yes	Permission required from the Chief of Police.
<u>San Antonio</u>	Officers can view their own recordings and detective-investigators and above have access to all recordings. Viewing is restricted for official use only, which includes criminal investigations; internal affairs; pursuits; use of force reviews; open record requests; officer involved crashes; or other reasons.	Yes	Yes, copies must be requested through the Video Evidence Custodian or their designee.
<u>San Bernardino</u>	Officers may review their own recordings for law enforcement purposes.	Yes	Not specified but digital evidence can only be copied by authorized personnel. Digital evidence is handled pursuant to state law and department policies and procedures.
<u>San Diego</u>	No restrictions on viewing own video. For general viewing, there is a list of acceptable administrative purposes.	Yes	Unauthorized copying is prohibited, but no permission process is specified. Digital evidence handled as investigative record and handled pursuant to state law and the department policies and procedures.

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<u>San Francisco</u>	Officers may view BWC footage for any “legitimate law enforcement purpose.”	Yes	Yes, “the officer-in-charge or commanding officer of the investigative unit assigned the incident recorded by the BWC, or the commanding officer of the Risk Management Office, shall have the authority to permit the duplication and distribution of the BWC files.”
<u>San Jose</u>	Viewing allowed for criminal investigations, preparing reports or testimony, training, and preparation of an Internal Affairs interview. Other reasons require permission of the Chief of Police.	Yes	Unauthorized copying is prohibited, but no permission process is specified.
<u>Seattle</u>	Viewing allowed for complaints, investigations, performance appraisal, audits, and other listed purposes. Only exception is they cannot view their own videos during FIT investigations.	Yes	Not specified but officers shall not make copies of footage for personal use.
<u>Tampa</u>	Officers required to view their footage before writing reports. Does not specify any viewing restrictions.	Yes	Chief of Police must give permission.
<u>Tucson</u>	Viewing allowed for investigations, reports, and preparation for hearings, depositions, and trials.	Not specified	No permission required for listed purposes; other copying requires supervisor approval from a commander or above.
<u>Washington, D.C.</u>	“[M]embers shall not view recordings for anything other than official law enforcement purposes.”	Yes	An official must give permission in writing.

Model Policies

Org	Does Viewing Require Allowed Purpose?	Is Viewing Logged?	Is Permission Required to Copy Video?
<u>ACLU Model Statute</u>	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
<u>International Association of Chiefs of Police</u>	Not specified	Not specified	Written approval required.
<u>Police Executive Research Forum</u>	Yes	Yes	Not specified