

**BCPPS 4.2.1 Body Worn Cameras**

The purpose of the BC Provincial Policing Standards for Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) is to ensure consistency in the way that critical aspects of BWC use are addressed by police agencies that have chosen to implement this technology. BWCs involve potential benefits but also potential risks. Standardizing key aspects of their use is intended to help mitigate these risks and promote an appropriate balance between the use of BWCs as an evidence gathering tool, and the need to safeguard privacy and other rights, and manage costs.

- **Viewpoints on BWCs vary significantly.** A wide range of interest groups and stakeholders cite different reasons for both supporting and being concerned about the use of this technology. These perspectives must be appropriately balanced so that BWCs can help the police do their job while also fostering the community's trust in the police.
- **BWCs can enhance evidence gathering for the police.** BWCs can provide an independent record of events, which can be used as evidence during a police investigation or prosecution. The adoption of this technology might thereby contribute to a more efficient and effective criminal justice system.
- **BWCs can increase accountability.** Video recordings of interactions between police and citizens can also provide evidence to be used in investigations of alleged police misconduct. Some studies have determined that BWCs have the potential to improve the behaviour of both police officers and citizens, and reduce complaints. To realize these potential benefits, there must be consistent and appropriate use of the technology; there should never be unexplained gaps in BWC recordings.
- **Privacy protections must be safeguarded.** Steps must be taken to ensure that any adoption of BWC technology by police agencies in British Columbia does not result in violations of existing privacy rights and associated legislation. Unauthorized viewing or distribution of BWC footage cannot be allowed, and the retention periods for BWC videos should be as short as possible without preventing the technology from assisting with an investigation or serving as an accountability tool.
- **Video can be a powerful tool, but it does not show the whole picture.** There will almost always be aspects of an incident described by witnesses but not captured by BWC footage and vice versa. Human perception is influenced by many factors including training and past experience, which BWC footage will not reflect. It is important to remember that BWCs are not a stand-alone solution.

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- **BWCs are a resource-intensive technology.** Police agencies that consider implementing BWCs will need to weigh the costs of the technology (such as purchasing and maintaining the equipment, training staff, and securely storing, processing and disposing of footage) against the potential benefits, while taking into account other local policing priorities. The BC Provincial Policing Standards for BWCs do not require police agencies in British Columbia to implement BWCs, but rather set requirements for those agencies choosing to do so.