



Frequently Asked Questions about Body-Worn Cameras Richmond Police Department

Forty officers from Fourth Precinct have been introduced to body-worn cameras and have begun testing the devices which will eventually become standard issue for all patrol officers.

Video from the cameras can be used as evidence against suspects and help monitor the performance and professional comportment of officers. Research studies show that departments using body-worn cameras have experienced a decline in assaults on officers as well as the necessity for officers to use force.

Q: What is a body-worn camera?

A: A small, battery-powered camera worn by police officers either on their uniform or on eyeglass frames.

Q: What kind of cameras will RPD use?

A: RPD officers are using cameras made by TASER, International. Two versions will be used: "Axon Flex" and "Axon Body 2."

Q: What's the difference between the two camera systems?

The "Axon Flex" camera connects to the shirt collar or eyeglass or sunglass frames. The "Axon Body 2" camera mounts in the center of the chest.

Q: Why are officers wearing cameras?

A: Axon body-worn cameras provide officers with key benefits:

- Reduces the number of citizen complaints;
- Decreases use of force;
- Provides for supervisory oversight;
- Improves the behavior of suspects and the quality of evidence gathered;
- Enhances public trust and creates safer communities at a lower cost;
- Decreases litigation and increases cost savings for each agency, and
- Technology infrastructure savings as a result of EVIDENCE.com.

Q: Will the cameras record audio as well as video?

A: Yes.

Q. How will I know if I'm being recorded by a body-worn video camera?

A: The officer will give his name and say, "This encounter is being recorded." However, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable, practical or safe to inform an individual that he or she is being recorded.

Q: Where are the video files stored?

A: The RPD uses Evidence.com, a cloud-based service, to store the files. Evidence.com maintains the chain of custody with a full audit trail.

Q. Can the videos be viewed by the public?

A: The Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code 2.2-3700, covers the release of public information, including body-worn camera video.

Q. How long are the videos kept?

A: Current policy is to not delete “Evidentiary” recordings – those which contain documentation that can be used in a criminal investigation, for court, or if it captures a confrontational encounter between an officer and a citizen.

“Non-evidentiary” recordings – which do not contain documentation that can be used as evidence and captures non-confrontational encounters between an officer and a citizen – shall be retained by Evidence.com for 90 days.