

VIDEO RECORDING SYSTEMS (Mobile and Body Worn)

Policy

The Bellevue Police Department will use mobile video equipment including in-car mobile and body-worn systems, whenever possible, to accomplish the following objectives; to enhance officer safety, to document statements and activities of an event for court or investigations, to train or critique employees, and to enhance public trust by capturing factual representations of police-citizen interactions.

All video and audio recorded by in-car mobile video and/or body-worn video cameras are the property of the Bellevue Police Department. These records are to be considered evidentiary and/or confidential until the Chief of Police changes said status of the records.

Procedure

Officers will be trained in the proper use and care of the specific recording system prior to using it. Patrol cars that are equipped with recording systems will be equipped with a copy of the operational manual or quick reference card.

Officers using in-car mobile or body-worn video systems will ensure the devices are charged and working properly. Officers will verify that the date and time is accurately displayed on systems where this information can be viewed by the Officer. If any malfunction is noted, the Officer will notify the on-duty Supervisor and document the problem in writing. The device will be repaired as soon as reasonably possible.

Use of In-Car Mobile and Body-Worn Video Systems

The in-car mobile and/or body-worn video systems will be utilized to record the following types of events whenever possible: traffic stops, pursuits, vehicle searches, confrontational citizen contacts, or use of force situations. Officers are encouraged, at their discretion, to use mobile and/or body-worn video systems during other law enforcement contacts.

When the in-car mobile and/or body-worn video system is activated to record an event, it should remain on until the Officer determines that the necessity to record the event has reached a conclusion. When an event is captured with a recording device, this fact will be documented in the report prepared regarding the event.

Department issued in-car mobile and/or body-worn video systems will not be used to record non-work related personal activity and will not be activated in places where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists, such as locker rooms, dressing rooms, or restrooms. In-car mobile or body-worn video systems will not be intentionally activated to record conversations of fellow employees without their knowledge during routine, non-enforcement activities. Copies of any recorded event for personal use is prohibited.

Disposition of Recorded Media

All recorded events will be uploaded to the Department evidence management system or turned over to the Property/Evidence Unit by placing the recorded media in an evidence locker as soon as reasonably possible. Once received by the Property/Evidence Unit, the recorded events will be held for a period of no less than sixty (60) days. Proper evidence submission is required for any recording requiring retention longer than sixty (60) days.

Review of Video Media and Damaged Video

Officers may review recorded events to aid in accurate report writing. Officers will not play back a recorded event to an arrestee, violator, or any non-Bellevue Police Department employee, except in conjunction with a follow-up investigation.

Any media damaged or erased by accident will be reported immediately to the on-duty Supervisor and the employee will make a written report detailing the circumstances of the incident. The report will be forwarded to the employee's Supervisor, who will forward it through the chain of command to the appropriate Division Commander. Intentional tampering with any recorded media will be cause for disciplinary action.

Duplication/Release of Video Media

Duplication of audio/video media will be performed only by employees of the Property/Evidence Unit or employees authorized by the Chief of Police.

Officers may request copies of recorded events under the following circumstances; training (with the Chief's approval), court preparation, investigative assistance, or to aid in report completion.

Requests for copies of recorded events will be submitted in writing to the Property/Evidence Unit. The documentation of the release, and the return of any recorded event, will be maintained by the Property/Evidence Unit. It is the requesting Officer's responsibility to return all copies of recorded events to the Property/Evidence Unit when they are no longer being used for the above mentioned purposes.

The Chief of Police, Division Commanders, and the Office of Professional Standards Investigator may obtain copies of recorded events for purposes of conducting an internal investigation, training, or pursuit review. Copies used for these purposes are not required to be returned to the Property/Evidence Unit.

Release of any recorded event to persons/agencies outside the Bellevue Police Department or the Sarpy County Attorney's Office must be approved by the Division Commander or the Chief of Police.

Use of Recorded Media for Internal Investigations

At no time will any employee of the Bellevue Police Department randomly review recorded video events for the purpose of seeking disciplinary action. If a written or verbal complaint against an employee has been received, either internally or externally, any member of the employee's chain of command and the Office of Professional Standards may review the recorded incident to determine the validity of a complaint prior to initiating an AIC.