A Handbook for Public Safety Officials

Developing the Policy, Technology and Operational Strategies Needed for a Future-Proof Body Camera Program

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP IN CRITICAL TIMES

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About this Handbook

This handbook focuses on the interplay of body camera policies with technology and operational strategies. It highlights key planning questions and insights from agencies initiating their own programs. Checklists and resources will help further an agency's exploration in each planning area.

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Body Camera Initiatives Require Careful Consideration

If there isn't a video, how can we really know what happened? This question — with all of its implications about trust and credibility for law enforcement agencies — is behind growing calls from the public for use of body-worn cameras in routine policing. In response, as many as one-third of agencies nationwide are actively planning camera programs; many have already implemented programs or are conducting pilots.

News stories show the use of body cameras by police departments is increasing across the country: "Illinois Cops Will Now Wear Body Cameras,"[1] "NYPD Expanding Police Body Camera Pilot Program"[2] and "Number of California Police Departments with Body Cameras Growing."[3]

And data shows the camera programs make a difference in officer interactions with the public:

- In a year-long experiment, the Rialto, Calif. Police Department saw a 60 percent drop in use-of-force incidents, and complaints about officer conduct declined by nearly 90 percent.[4]
- In Phoenix, information from officers suggested a number of citizen complaints were not pursued because the incident was recorded on video.[5]
- Chiefs in agencies that have implemented body cameras, such as in Oakland, Calif., indicate officers and citizens exhibit better behavior when they are aware they are being recorded.[6]

"Although we had already been exploring the use of body-worn cameras, like most departments, the events that unfolded in Ferguson and Baltimore prompted us to consider it more vigorously," says Sgt. Brien Turner of the Jackson, Tenn. Police Department. "We saw the need for an unbiased witness that would free officers from frivolous complaints of wrongdoing. We also believe a body camera program can protect citizens by substantiating complaints of policy infractions."[7]

Agencies looking to implement body cameras need to carefully consider the policies, technology infrastructure and operational decisions necessary for an effective program. Developing these key strategies is important even before conducting a pilot project.

The first strategies will focus on how, where and when the cameras will be used by officers. In addition, agencies will need to determine how to store, manage and protect the integrity of all video files produced by those cameras. It's important to identify the right technology infrastructure from the start so an agency is not stuck in a solution that will create problems in a few years, especially for storage capacity and ongoing operations.

The interplay of body camera policies with technology and operational strategies is the focus of this handbook. It highlights key planning questions as well as insights from agencies initiating their own programs. Checklists and resources will help further an agency's exploration in each planning area.

Positive Results from Police Body Cameras

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- In Phoenix, information from officers suggested a number of citizen complaints were not pursued because the incident was recorded on video.
- Chiefs in agencies that have implemented body cameras, such as in Oakland, Calif., indicate officers and citizens exhibit better behavior when they are aware they are being recorded.

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Part 1: Gathering Input, Addressing Concerns and Setting Expectations

The policy and technology choices in any body camera program will need to address the inputs and concerns of many internal and external stakeholders. Yet it will likely be impossible — from a policy, technology or operations standpoint — to design a program fully accepted by everyone.

This limitation makes it important to set realistic expectations for the community, officers and agency personnel, and public officials about how body cameras and the videos they produce will be used in policing activities. Not every agency will develop the same program or have the same policies or processes. It is the planning that's valuable for creating an effective program for both the agency and the public.

Check Information Sources

To start an effective planning process, gather information from relevant sources, including:

- State and federal laws, local ordinances and court rulings regarding body camera use and admissibility of video evidence
- State and federal privacy protection laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for any incidents involving medical care and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for camera use in a school setting
- Best practices, policy models and technology standards developed by other law enforcement agencies and professional organizations (see the list of resources at the end of the handbook)

This information will help identify legal requirements that must be incorporated into policies and activities, especially for camera use and video handling. An agency may also find policy language and program guidelines that provide a good starting point.

Gather Community Input

It will be easier to gain community acceptance and trust for camera use if public input is solicited during the planning process. Individual citizens, civil rights and community organizations, and media representatives will have diverse concerns and goals for body camera use. While listening to their comments, it's also important to guide public expectations about what wearable cameras can and cannot do in terms of providing evidence, protecting privacy, maintaining safety for officers and citizens, and supporting transparency and accountability for officer behavior and department procedures.

The Chesapeake, Va. Police Department, which has used body cameras since 2009, provides an example of how policies must balance privacy concerns with officer safety and the ability to manage an encounter. For example, agency policy requires officers to turn off their body cameras when inside medical facilities, but does not require officers to notify citizens when they are being recorded during a police interaction.[8]

It's also important to be clear about whether the video is considered a public record under state law and to communicate the guidelines under which any video will be released publicly. Agencies may want to create educational materials for citizens and media about the importance of protecting evidence and investigations, respecting the rights of victims and bystanders, and the requirements of privacy and public disclosure laws. As of early 2015, at least 15 state legislatures are considering bills to define public access to police camera video.[9]

Collaborate with Internal Stakeholders

Within the agency, program planning will be more effective if it is done as a collaborative effort by the internal stakeholders. The table on page 7 shows the types of internal staff who may be involved and the questions they may want answered in the program plan. All of these stakeholders will also benefit from ongoing education about camera uses and concerns, as well as regular communications about the development of the program.

Body Camera Planning Stakeholders and Concerns

Stakeholder	Typical Concerns
Key Agency Executives	• What impact will body cameras have on agency operations and community relations, as well as officer safety, performance and morale? • What levels of funding and staffing will be necessary to implement a body camera program? Who will be the primary program manager? • Will collective-bargaining agreements need to be renegotiated because officer use of body cameras changes the terms and conditions of their work?
Chief Information Officer (CIO) or IT Manager	• What are the technology requirements and life cycle budget for a body camera program? • What changes will we need to make to server, storage and network infrastructure? • Will we be able to easily integrate the video files with our field reporting, records management and computer-aided dispatch systems? • Can we consider cloud services and other innovative solutions for video storage and management?
Legal Staff	• Will the agency's choice of technologies comply with state laws and judicial requirements about protecting privacy and rights, as well as maintaining evidence integrity? • Will policies about camera use, consent for recording under specific circumstances, video retention and public release comply with state laws and support prosecution needs? • Will the technology choice raise any potential liability issues?
Officers and Supervisors	• Will the body camera technology and the agency's use policies help or hinder our work? • Where will we find the time to upload and annotate video? • What will we need to do with the cameras before and after a shift? • What happens if the camera malfunctions, is knocked off in a struggle, or if I forget to turn it on or off at the right time? • Who will manage the assignment, control and replacement of cameras, batteries and accessories? Will the battery charge last for a full 8- to 12-hour shift?
Purchasing and Finance Managers	• What will be the capital and operating costs of the full technology solution? • How often will the technology need to be replaced or refreshed and how should those costs be budgeted? • Are there special contract requirements from vendors we will need to accommodate? • Where will the money come from and what are the requirements and constraints of those funding sources? • Can we adequately track the cameras and related equipment in our asset management system?
Training Manager	• What kind of training will officers and supervisors need regarding policies and procedures for camera use and video handling? • What kind of training will be needed by other agency staff? • What training resources are available from the technology vendors and service providers?
Records Manager	• How will video files need to be handled as evidence and public records? • How will we integrate video files into our existing evidence and records management systems? If integration is impossible, does the video management system platform provide adequate features for managing video files as evidence and agency records? • Will additional staff be needed to review, redact and fulfill video release requirements from prosecutors, defense attorneys, the media and citizens?

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Part 2:

Developing the Right Policies and Choosing the Right Technologies

When planning a body camera program, it's important to define policies and choose technologies in an integrated effort to ensure they support the agency's legal requirements and objectives. If policy is developed without knowledge of technical capabilities and costs, it's possible to arrive at decisions that are unworkable or unsustainable. "Talk with other agencies that have already implemented a camera program and utilize any policies they may have in place that would work for your department," says the Jackson Police Department's Turner.

The following sections present important questions to explore in a planning effort. There is a brief description of the concerns addressed by the question and how the answer affects technology choices and costs. A checklist presents a convenient summary of the criteria to guide a policy and technology plan.

How Will Body Cameras Be Used in the Field?

The agency's plan for camera use becomes a key factor in controlling costs of the overall technology infrastructure. This plan addresses which officers will receive the cameras and when, where and how they can be used. Among the questions to consider in planning camera use:

- If there are fewer cameras than officers, how will assignments be prioritized?
- Will cameras be worn only by patrol officers or also by plainclothes officers, detectives, supervisors, reserve officers and citizen volunteers? (The Huntington County, Ind. Sheriff's Department plans to buy cameras for reserve officers because they handle the same duties as full-time deputies.[10])
- What accessories and ancillary equipment will officers and supervisors need to use the cameras effectively?
- How will the agency keep and manage an inventory of spare cameras, batteries and related items?

Camera Checklist

- ☑ List the elements that will need to be purchased for the complete camera solution, including batteries, docking stations and other items.
- ☑ Think about who will manage the tasks of camera assignment, maintenance and replacement.

These questions will help in identifying the body-worn camera solution best suited to an agency's operations. Given cameras can each cost as much as $1,000 or more, these answers are also important for accurately predicting the program budget.[11]

Will a Single System Manage All Video Types?

Wearable cameras aren't the only sources of video files an agency will need to manage and store in a video management system (VMS). Other video sources include an officer's vehicle cameras, street surveillance cameras, building security video and cell phone video submitted by citizens.

Video Management System Checklist

- ☑ Specify the various sources and types of video files the agency will need to manage.
- ☑ Determine how the VMS will support the video access and review needs of different users involved in investigation and prosecution activities.

An open-platform VMS has the flexibility to support multiple camera types and video sources. An open system also allows an agency to associate video files from multiple sources to a single case file for handoff to the prosecutor's office. These factors could make an open VMS an attractive choice for long-term video management.

How Will Officers Tag, Annotate and Upload Body Camera Video?

What happens at the end of an officer's shift is another important point for defining policy and procedures, and in turn determining what technology will be required to support that activity. For example, an agency may want to identify all video files with relevant keyword tags to help with VMS searches for a particular incident. Or it may want officers to add comments in the file to offer context before uploading it to the VMS. Both of these capabilities are helpful for using the videos as evidence or for training purposes.

Before evaluating body cameras and a VMS, consider these questions about policies and activities for video upload, tagging and commenting:

- Should video files be uploaded at the end of each work shift at the station or precinct office? Or throughout the shift as time is available, using a laptop or tablet with a cellular or Wi-Fi network connection?
- Will officers be required to tag and enter comments in each video file? If so, what are the guidelines for the type and extent of information to enter? Can the VMS automatically enter some of this information, e.g., the timestamp and GPS metadata recorded by the camera?
- Can camera data be integrated with data from the agency's computer-aided dispatch or field reporting systems before it is transferred to the case file?
- What types of controls and audit trails need to be in place for post-upload viewing and annotation of videos by officers, supervisors and other agency personnel?
- Will the VMS need to integrate the body camera video files with the agency's records management system?

Network capacity is also a concern, especially in a large agency. Dozens of officers uploading multiple, HD-quality video files simultaneously can slow network performance. Look at the network capacity and traffic management features that will support concurrent video uploads. Also review the VMS features for queuing video uploads to reduce the time spent by officers on this task.

Officers should also have the capability to upload and live stream video from the field. This may require additional bandwidth, so an agency should allocate an appropriate budget. Additionally, the cellular network must provide an adequate data rate for streaming a live feed with acceptable image and audio quality. Because live

Video Tagging and Commenting Checklist

- ☑ Evaluate the user interface and control features of the video management software for tagging and commenting on videos by the camera user.
- ☑ Assess the types of automatic metadata appended automatically by the camera to the video file.
- ☑ Analyze the capacity of internal and cellular networks for video streams and uploads.

streaming means additional costs, an agency may want to allow officers to stream video from a personal smartphone or tablet. If so, it's important to review the legal and privacy implications for the officer and the department.

Video Protection Checklist

- ☑ Review security and control capabilities in the cameras and the VMS.
- ☑ Create policies and procedures for controlling and auditing access to stored video files.
- ☑ Check if the data center complies with the FBI CJIS standards.

How Will Body Camera Video as Evidence Be Protected?

Implementing a body camera program may have less value if the technology doesn't preserve the integrity of video files so they can be admissible in criminal prosecutions, civil cases and internal investigations. The technology choices will play a key role in:

- Preventing tampering with and unauthorized access to stored video files
- Maintaining a verifiable chain of custody for evidentiary materials
- Automating the management tasks for video retention and deletion
- Maintaining the video in its native format to ensure its validity as evidence in an investigation
- Integrating video files with the agency's records management system

Video management systems perform these tasks, but often with significant differences in specific features, implementation requirements and integration capabilities.

Cybersecurity measures also play a vital role in protecting the integrity of digital video. Whether the video files are stored in an internal data center or a service provider's cloud, they must be protected from unauthorized access, changes, copying, deletion and release. The FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division publishes standards for security measures in data centers that store law enforcement agency data, including video.[12]

Where Will Video Be Stored?

It's easy to understand that the more cameras an agency has and the more they are used, the greater the need for servers, storage systems and network capacity to upload, retain and manage the video files. How many videos should an agency expect? With just 11 cameras in use, the Duluth, Minn. Police Department stores 8,000 to 10,000 videos per month.[13]

Video file storage is the most expensive aspect of a body camera program. Agencies have reported cost estimates ranging from tens of thousands to millions of dollars per year for storage infrastructure and the employees to manage it.[14]

The expected size, number and necessary retention of video files will help determine whether on-premises, cloud or hybrid storage is the best solution. State or local laws may also set requirements for retention periods and use of in-house and/or cloud storage.

In-House Storage Checklist

- ☑ Estimate how much additional capacity will be required for body camera video and how much capital investment will be needed.
- ☑ Determine whether additional IT staff will be needed to manage the VMS and storage resources as well as their integration with other agency systems and ongoing data center operations, maintenance and upgrades.

In-House Storage

Storing all body camera videos on-premises may be the right choice, especially for agencies or governments that operate their own data centers. It's just a matter of estimating how much additional capacity will be required for body camera video and how much capital investment will be needed for additional servers, storage systems and network capacity to serve the expected video volumes, access requirements and retention periods.

"Our pilot project has confirmed that video storage and retention will be a big issue, so we are looking at internal storage solutions," says Turner. "With tight budget restraints, it would be nearly impossible for us to budget for cloud storage on a yearly basis if we increase the number of cameras or officers, or if there was a change in the camera usage per hour."

Cloud Storage Checklist

- Confirm state laws and local ordinances allow cloud services to store video, as either primary or backup storage.
- Verify the service provider maintains up-to-date compliance with the FBI CJIS Security Policy.
- Obtain information on all service costs and other purchasing factors that might apply for the life of the contract.
- Review the provider's capabilities for protecting uploaded video from unauthorized viewing, download, alteration and deletion.
- Assess the adequacy of the information tracked in audit logs and the retention period for log data.

However, because the IT department will need to buy a complete server or storage element to deliver even a small increment of more capacity, in-house storage can mean continued high capital expenses over time.

Another important VMS function is to manage the utilization of storage capacity and to automate retention and deletion of video files. Policies that define retention schedules, especially for non-evidentiary video, play a significant role in determining how much storage capacity will be needed. Automated deletion tools, provided by the VMS, will help to ensure storage capacity isn't consumed by video files that have gone past their retention date.

Cloud Storage

A cloud solution stores all video off-site, on a service provider's servers and storage systems. Video files are uploaded, downloaded and accessed through a secure Internet connection to the service provider's data center. One downside of this approach is the cost associated with ensuring the network has enough bandwidth to upload, download and stream videos from the cloud. In addition, some agencies can be challenged to find budget for cloud storage since it is an operating expenditure versus a capital expenditure. A cloud storage solution, however, still offers several advantages over in-house storage:

- Capacity can be easily and economically expanded only when it is actually needed.
- The service provider maintains redundant systems for reliable file access and adequate network connections for acceptable upload and download speeds.
- Cloud services are easy and fast to activate; there is no need to wait for deployment of in-house infrastructure.

"We are planning for off-site video storage because it will be easier to manage and we won't need to invest in servers," says Officer Mike Tanner of the Clarksville, Tenn. Police Department. As of mid-2015, the department was evaluating body cameras for its approximately 300 sworn officers.[15]

A cloud solution stores all video off-site, on a service provider's servers and storage systems. The service provider maintains redundant systems for reliable file access and adequate network connections for acceptable upload and download speeds.

Choosing a Storage Backup Solution

An agency's requirements for maintaining a backup copy of video files — especially evidentiary video — will also impact storage decisions. This is a situation when a hybrid storage solution may be the right choice, with a cloud service providing a backup and disaster recovery solution for on-premises storage systems.

Backup Solution Checklist

- Verify measures for preserving the video file integrity during backup.
- Evaluate features for controlling and auditing file access.
- Identify features and procedures for automated backup and retention management; e.g., when the primary file is deleted, the backup file is deleted automatically.
- Confirm adequate cybersecurity measures are in place for backup systems and data centers.

How Will Video Redaction and Public Release Be Managed?

Many agencies will face difficult policy decisions around the conditions for releasing body camera video and what they must redact to protect victims, witnesses, informants and ongoing investigations. However, much of this policy may be determined by state laws as legislators vote to exempt body camera recordings from public records as a way to protect privacy and save agencies the effort and costs of redaction and release work.[16]

Within the parameters of state law and agency policy, evaluate how the VMS supports redaction and release tasks and how those capabilities may impact staffing requirements. For example, facial recognition and advanced search capabilities help staff quickly find related videos.

Video Redaction and Release Checklist

- ☑ Determine how state public disclosure law defines body camera video and restrictions on release, if it is allowed at all.
- ☑ Identify needed features for video review and types of redaction, e.g., blurring of selected areas in the image.
- ☑ Evaluate how well the VMS supports the work of responding to requests for video release.
- ☑ Develop a staffing plan as well as policies and procedures for video release.

Where Will the Money Come From?

There is no question about one aspect of a body-worn camera program: It carries substantial costs. The first costs will be the capital investment in cameras and batteries, the VMS, and storage systems and servers if the video files will be stored in an internal data center.

Once the project is launched, an agency will need funds to cover long-term operating costs. These costs typically will include operational staffing as well as planned replacement of cameras and related equipment as they reach end of life.

Because HD video files consume so much storage space, it can be easy to fill up existing storage systems quickly. For cloud-based storage, budget for the ongoing service charges and costs of increased capacity. In-house storage will incur operating costs for more capacity and routine maintenance and upgrades of the storage infrastructure.

Potential Funding Sources

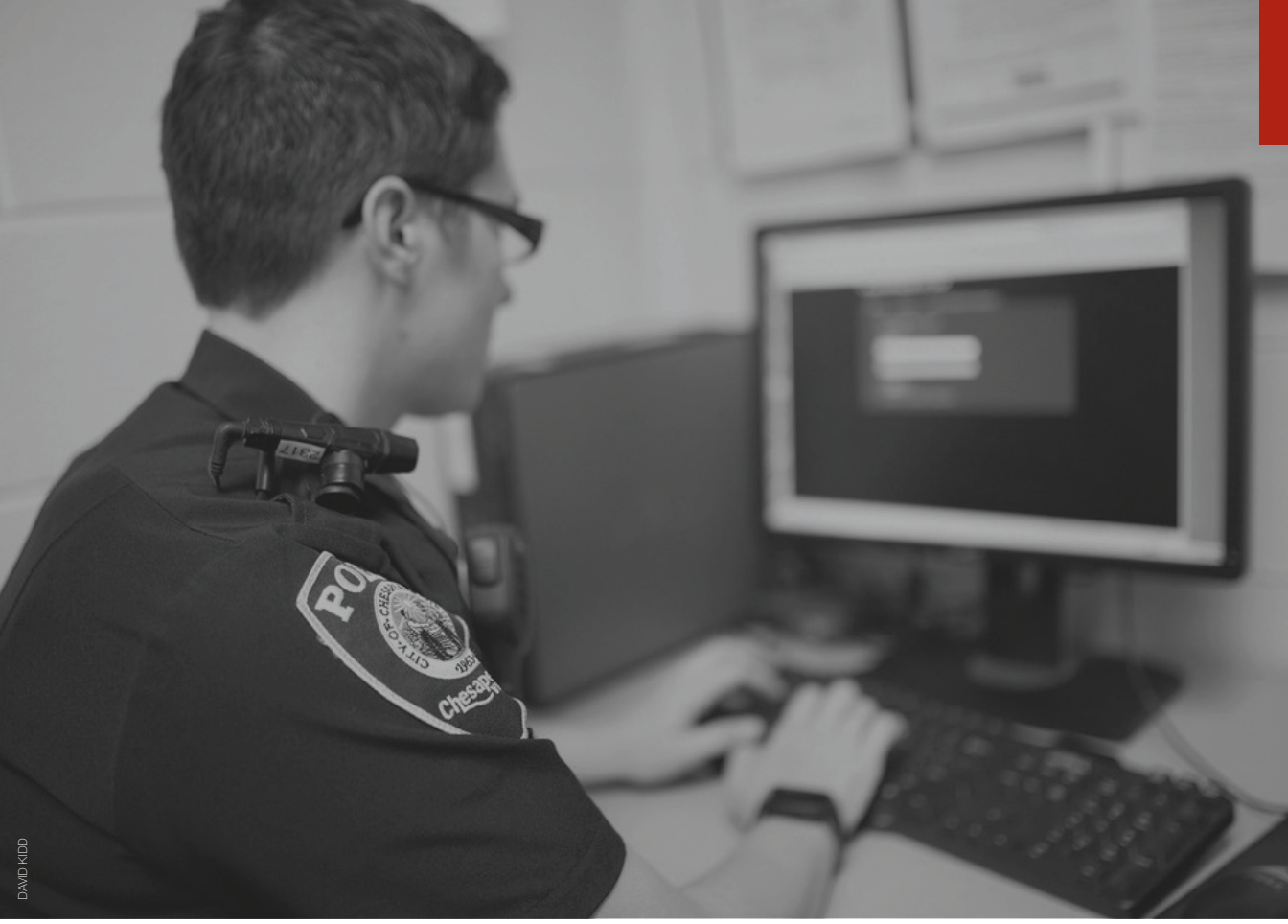
In most cases, agencies will need to find new money to pay for the capital investments and operating expenses of a body camera program. Cutting department services or raising taxes aren't always sustainable options. Instead, it's important to explore multiple — and sometimes creative — funding sources.

✓ **State and local fund allocations.** Check whether camera purchases and ongoing storage costs can be covered in a current IT operations budget, by using discretionary funds or an allocation from a technology bond, or by making a designated-funds request in the next budget cycle.

✓ **Federal grants.** In May 2015, the U. S. Department of Justice announced $20 million in funding for the purchase of body cameras by local and tribal law enforcement agencies.[17] This funding is part of President Obama's proposal to invest $75 million over 3 years to purchase body-worn cameras for law enforcement agencies. Community policing funding or other federal grant programs may also provide support for body cameras.

✓ **Special sources.** Some agencies are looking beyond traditional government monies, especially if outside funds can mean getting cameras on the lapels of officers more quickly. In New Jersey, a new $25 fine on convicted drunk drivers is designated for body camera programs.[18] The Los Angeles and Greensboro, N.C. police departments have received grants from community foundations and private donors who want to support improved community and law enforcement relations.[19] However, while one-time grants help with program startup costs, agencies need to ensure they have the budget to sustain the ongoing program.

✓ **Cost savings in other budgets.** Video information may reduce citizen complaints, lawsuits and the number of cases proceeding to trials. This can free substantial funds for camera programs. Additional cost savings may emerge as the agency gains experience to make more efficient use of the cameras and video storage resources.



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Part 3:

Creating a Long-Term Body Camera Program

The final two elements of strategic planning focus on the long-term success of the camera program. First, a well-considered pilot project will help all stakeholders gain a better understanding of how cameras will impact policing activity and agency operations. Second, looking ahead to how other departments may use body cameras will guide technology choices now in ways that will make sense and save money over the long term.

Design a Meaningful Pilot Project

The Jackson, Tenn. Police Department is gaining useful planning insights from its body camera pilot project. The department's 220 sworn officers serve more than 100,000 people who live and work in this regional hub city. Sgt. Turner is managing the program with support from a planning committee that includes a department captain as well as the records clerk, city IT manager and a civilian grants manager.

It's important to keep in mind that a pilot project can't cover all aspects of a full body camera program. An agency will have a better chance of gaining a successful outcome and useful lessons by limiting what is tested in the pilot. For example, assign cameras only to a small number of officers who perform similar duties.

It will also help to define metrics for success before the pilot begins. Will success be based on improved evidence collection, more positive interactions with

the public or reduced complaints? Firm start and end dates for the program allow an agency to collect results and determine whether and how to move ahead with full program implementation.

Create a Strong Foundation for the Future

Wearable cameras are joining the many technologies that will help all emergency personnel work more effectively and safely in the field. In the near future, a first responder's in-vehicle, mobile and wearable devices will be networked to deliver real-time camera video streams, radio voice communications, and sensor data indicating location, physical status and environmental conditions.

Decisions made now about body cameras and their supporting infrastructure can make it easier to adopt these new devices and communications capabilities — and extend them to more employees in the future.

Decisions made now about body cameras and their supporting infrastructure can make it easier to adopt these new devices and communications capabilities — and extend them to more employees in the future. It's not too soon to evaluate who else could benefit from in-vehicle or body cameras. As a starting point, look at the jobs where employee safety and interactions with the public are a concern:

- Firefighters and emergency medical responders
- Animal control, parking and code enforcement officers
- Corrections staff and probation officers
- Transit operators

In each case, the strategic planning work done for law enforcement personnel can be applied to assess the needs, technologies and policies for these other departments.

In the end, strategic choices for technology and policy enable law enforcement agencies, officers, the judicial system and the public to realize more benefits from body camera programs. Taking the time to develop complete and well-thought-out strategies now will help the program implementation go more smoothly and create solid ground for expanded use of body cameras in the future.

Resources

Police Executive Research Forum, "Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program: Recommendations and Lessons Learned," http://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Technology/implementing%20a%20body-worn%20camera%20program.pdf

Insights about the first responder of the future are provided in information published by the Department of Homeland Security for its Next-Generation First Responder Apex Program, http://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/ngfr

The International Association of Chiefs of Police offers articles and information resources on body-worn cameras:

- **Technology information:**
  http://www.iacptechnology.org/technologies/video_technologies/body_worn_video.html
- **Model policies:**
  http://www.theiacp.org/MPBodyWornCameras
- **Guiding principles on cloud computing in law enforcement:**
  http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/GuidingPrinciplesonCloudComputinginLawEnforcement.pdf

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