



Sheriff Steve Stovall

Stephenson County Sheriff's Office

STEPHENSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE BODY WORN CAMERA ANNUAL REPORT - 2024

Pursuant to the Law Enforcement Officer Body Worn Camera Act, 50 ILCS 706/10 the Stephenson County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) was not required to institute the use of Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) until January 1, 2025; however, the SCSO deployed them on or about March 21, 2024. The SCSO uses BWCs to document encounters with the community so as to facilitate professionalism, accountability, and transparency. The SCSO utilizes Axon Body 4 BWCs.

The Stephenson County Sheriff's Office is authorized by the Stephenson County Board to employ thirty-three (33) sworn law enforcement personnel. As such, the law enforcement side of SCSO is made up of the following.

- Sheriff
- Chief Deputy
- 2 Lieutenants
- 5 Sergeants
- 24 Deputies

The SCSO owns thirty-eight (38) Axon BWCs and all sworn law enforcement personnel at the SCSO are assigned their own. In addition to the BWCs that are issued to all sworn law enforcement personnel, several spare BWCs are kept in reserve status in the event of a technical issue or damage that would render an assigned BWC inoperable. During the year 2024, the SCSO experienced no significant physical or technical issues with any BWCs. The only reported malfunctions of any BWCs during 2024 were a few occasions when they did not activate when the squad car's emergency lights were turned on; however, those incidents were found to be related to the squad cars and not the BWCs themselves.

The SCSO has a monthly review process in place wherein each level of supervision is directed to review, at a minimum, one BWC recording per authorized user each month. The monthly BWC recording review process is documented on audit forms which are compiled by the BWC Program Manager and stored electronically on an SCSO computer server. The audit forms require the reviewing supervisor to document the following information for each recording, deputy name, incident date, incident time, incident number, nature of footage, and a notation whether the BWC was appropriately used. SCSO policy also directs that when a supervisor becomes aware of a recorded critical incident, the supervisor should review only those recordings necessary and relevant to their investigative scope.

During the 2024 monthly reviews, there were two (2) BWC videos that were deemed non-compliant; one (1) was a failure to activate the BWC at the on-set of the contact, and the other one (1) involved the recording deputies failing to notify the citizen that the BWCs were activated. Both of these incidents were discussed with the responsible deputies to prevent future similar occurrences.

In addition to the monthly recording review process, the BWC Program Manager regularly reviews the BWC recordings that are uploaded to the Sheriff's Office evidence.com cloud storage site to ensure they are properly marked with the incident number and correctly categorized. If an issue is discovered during this process, the BWC Program Manager will either remedy it or notify the appropriate deputy/supervisor to make the necessary corrections.



Chief Deputy Andy Schroeder



Date