



April 25, 2025

**To:** Ms. Jennifer Wooldridge  
Illinois Law Enforcement Testing and  
Standards Board

**Cc:** Illinois General Assembly                      Office of Illinois Governor J. Pritzker

**From:** Kevin Zelk  
Deputy Chief of Administration  
City of Lake Forest  
255 W Deerpath  
Lake Forest, IL 60045

**Re:** 2025 Body Worn Camera Report

Ms. Wooldridge,

Pursuant to the Body Worn Camera Act (50 ILCS 706/10-25), the Lake Forest Police Department is providing to following information regarding our Body Worn Camera (BWC) program.

- The Lake Forest Police Department, when fully staffed, has 40 sworn personnel. As of this writing, we have 27 Officers, 4 Sergeants, 3 Commanders, 2 Deputy Chiefs, and 1 Chief of Police. Each sworn employee is assigned their own Body Worn Camera (BWC). The BWC program was established at our department in 2023.
- Our agency is equipped with Axon Body 3 Body Worn Cameras. In our current inventory, we have 41 BWC devices. Of these devices, 37 are currently in use.
- Over the last year, we had one technical issue with one of the BWC devices.
  - a. One officer advised that their BWC was no longer holding a charge.
    - i. This issue was forwarded to the BWC program administrator who performed a physical inspection of the device. No obvious damage was observed and an independent charge was attempted. After 24-hours of charging, the device would not power on. Axon support was contacted, and the RMA process was initiated. The affected device was sent to Axon



who confirmed the battery issue. A new replacement device was sent. Axon support was unable to recover any previously recorded BWC footage on the broken device.

- Throughout the year, supervisors review officer-recorded BWC footage for various purposes, including performance evaluations, compliance monitoring, random spot checks, and the investigation of misconduct complaints. During these inspections, supervisors check to make sure officers are operating their BWCs in accordance with the Body Worn Camera Act. Additionally, supervisors are reviewing whether officers are properly documenting BWC use in police reports.
  - a. A copy of our quarterly review form is attached.
  
- The Lake Forest Police Department has established a policy (Policy 435) regarding the use of Portable Audio/Video Recorders. Additionally, our agency has seen a dramatic increase in the number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests related to BWC footage. Each of these requests is carefully evaluated under the Body Worn Camera Act and current FOIA law.
  - a. A copy of our policy is attached.

Please let our agency know if you have any questions or require any further information.

Respectfully,



Deputy Chief Kevin Zelk



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## Body-Worn Cameras

### 435.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the use of a body-worn camera (BWC) by members of this department and for the access, use, and retention of department BWC media (50 ILCS 706/10-20).

The provisions of this policy, including notice, documentation, access, and retention, also apply to other portable audio/video recording devices used by members, where applicable.

This policy does not apply to undercover operations, wiretaps, or eavesdropping (concealed listening devices).

#### 435.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include (50 ILCS 706/10-10; 50 ILCS 706/10-20):

**Activate** - To place a BWC in active mode (also called event mode). In active mode, the BWC records both video and audio.

**BWC media** - The video, audio, and images captured by department BWCs and the associated metadata.

**BWC media systems** - Any software, including web-based programs and mobile applications, authorized by ILETSB and used by the Department to upload/download, store, view, transfer, and otherwise maintain BWC media.

**Deactivate** - To place a BWC in buffering mode (also called ready or pre-event mode). In buffering mode, the BWC records video (without audio) in short, predetermined intervals of at least 30 seconds that are retained only temporarily. However, when a BWC is activated, the interval recorded immediately prior to activation is then stored as part of the BWC media. Deactivate does not mean powering off the BWC.

**Event** - A general term referring to a set of circumstances that may, but does not necessarily, correlate directly to a single public safety incident.

**Law enforcement-related encounters or activities** - Activities in which the member is enforcing the law, including traffic or pedestrian stops, arrests, searches, interrogations, investigations, pursuits, crowd, and traffic control. It does not include tasks unrelated to the investigation of a crime such as participating in town halls or other community outreach; helping a child find the child's parents; providing death notifications; performing in-home or hospital well-being checks on the sick, elderly, or persons presumed missing; or completing paperwork while alone, participating in training in a classroom setting, or tasks performed only in the presence of another law enforcement officer.

**Community caretaking function** - A task undertaken by a law enforcement officer in which the officer is performing an articulable act unrelated to the investigation of a crime. "Community caretaking function" includes, but is not limited to, participating in town halls or other community

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outreach, helping a child find his or her parents, providing death notifications, and performing in home or hospital well-being checks on the sick, elderly, or persons presumed missing.

### **435.2 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Department to use BWCs and BWC media for evidence collection and to accurately document events in a way that promotes member safety and department accountability and transparency while also protecting the privacy of members of the public.

### **435.3 RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **435.3.1 BWC COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Chief of Police or the authorized designee should delegate certain responsibilities to a BWC coordinator.

The responsibilities of the coordinator include (50 ILCS 706/10-20):

- (a) Serving as a liaison between the Department and the BWC manufacturer/distributor and any third-party media storage vendor.
- (b) Acquiring sufficient BWCs to equip all law enforcement officers with BWCs while on duty (50 ILCS 706/10-15).
- (c) Ensuring BWCs are equipped with pre-event recording of at least 30 seconds prior to activation and can record for at least 10 hours as required by law.
- (d) Developing inventory procedures for issuing and tracking BWC equipment, including properly marking BWCs as property of the Department and recording the date each BWC is placed into or taken out of service.
- (e) Assisting with troubleshooting and maintenance of BWC equipment and media systems and, when necessary, coordinating the repair or replacement of BWCs.
  1. All equipment and system malfunctions and their resolutions should be documented, and maintenance and repair records should be maintained for all BWCs.
- (f) Managing BWC media systems so that:
  1. Systems used by the Department are authorized by ILETSB (50 ILCS 706/10-10).
  2. Access is limited to the minimum necessary authorized users and user privileges are restricted to those necessary for the member to conduct assigned department duties.
  3. Security requirements, such as two-factor authentication and appropriate password parameters, are in place for user credentials.
- (g) Configuring BWC media systems, or developing manual procedures, so that media is appropriately categorized and retained according to the event type tagged by members.

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- (h) Retaining audit logs or records of all access, alteration, and deletion of BWC media and media systems, and conducting periodic audits to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and department policy.
- (i) Developing and updating BWC training for members who are assigned a BWC or given access to BWC media systems.
- (j) Coordinating with the community relations coordinator to (see the Community Relations Policy):
  - 1. Provide the public with notice of the department's use of BWCs (e.g., posting on the department website or social media pages).
  - 2. Gain insight into community expectations regarding BWC use.
- (k) Coordinating with the Deputy Chief of Administration to (see the Records Section and Records Maintenance and Release policies):
  - 1. Determine and apply proper retention periods to BWC media.
  - 2. Develop procedures for the appropriate release of BWC media.
- (l) Coordinating with the Evidence and Property Room to develop procedures for the transfer, storage, and backup of evidentiary BWC media (see the Evidence and Property Room Policy).
- (m) Establishing procedures to comply with the Law Enforcement Officer-Worn Body Camera Act and guidelines developed by ILETSB for BWC use.
- (n) Providing the required annual report to ILETSB (50 ILCS 706/10-25).

### **435.3.2 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Every member issued a BWC is responsible for its proper use, safekeeping, and maintenance.

At the beginning of each shift or period of BWC use, the member should inspect their assigned BWC to confirm it is charged and in good working order. As part of the inspection, the member should perform a function test by activating the BWC and recording a brief video stating their name, identification number, assignment, and the date and time.

Members should wear their assigned BWC on their outermost garment positioned at or near chest level and as close to the center of their body as practicable. Members are responsible for ensuring there are no obstructions and that the BWC remains in a position suitable for recording.

When a BWC is not in the physical possession of the member to which it is assigned, it should be placed on the charging dock and stored in a secure location.

Members shall document and report any malfunction or damage to the BWC or associated equipment to the BWC coordinator or on-duty supervisor as soon as practicable and, if possible, obtain a functioning BWC to use either temporarily while repairs are being made to the member's BWC or as a permanent replacement (50 ILCS 706/10-20).

### **435.4 BWC USE**

Deputy Chief of Administration The following guidelines apply to the use of BWCs:

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- (a) Only department-issued BWCs should be used without the express consent of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.
- (b) BWCs should only be used by the member or members to whom it was issued unless otherwise authorized by a supervisor.
- (c) The use of department-issued BWCs shall be strictly limited to department-related activities.
- (d) Members shall not use BWCs or BWC media systems for which they have not received prior authorization and appropriate training.
- (e) Members shall immediately report unauthorized access or use of BWCs or BWC media systems by another member to their supervisor or the Deputy Chief of Administration .

### 435.4.1 PROHIBITIONS

BWCs should not be used to record (50 ILCS 706/10-20):

- (a) Routine administrative activities of the Department that do not involve interactions with the public. Care should be taken to avoid incidentally recording confidential documents that the Department has a duty to keep secure (i.e., criminal justice information).
- (b) Areas within the department facilities where members have a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g., locker rooms or dressing areas, breakrooms) unless responding to a call for service or conducting an investigation.
- (c) Conversations of other members without their knowledge.
- (d) When a member is taking an authorized break or otherwise engaged in personal activities.
- (e) In a courtroom or correctional facility equipped with a functioning camera system unless responding to a call for service or emergency situation.
- (f) Interactions with undercover officers or confidential informants.
- (g) Strip searches.

BWCs shall not be used for the purpose of embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule of any individual or group.

### 435.5 ACTIVATION OF BWC

Members shall activate their BWC during all calls for service or during the performance of law enforcement-related encounters or activities. Members are not required to activate their BWC during casual or informal contacts with members of the public that are not part of or related to law enforcement-related encounters or activities, or while inside a patrol car equipped with functioning Mobile Audio/Video (MAV). However, members should activate their BWC any time a contact with an individual becomes hostile or adversarial, or the member has a reasonable articulable suspicion that the individual has committed or is in the process of committing a crime (50 ILCS 706/10-20).

Unless otherwise authorized by this policy or approved by a supervisor, BWCs shall remain activated until the call for service or law enforcement-related encounter or activity has concluded.

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A member may cease recording if they are simply waiting for a tow truck or a family member to arrive, or in other similar situations.

At no time is a member expected to jeopardize their safety to activate their BWC. However, the BWC should be activated as soon as reasonably practicable in required situations (50 ILCS 706/10-20).

If a member attempts to activate their BWC but the BWC fails to record an event, the member should notify their supervisor as soon as practicable.

### 435.5.1 NOTICE OF RECORDING

Unless otherwise approved based on unique circumstances, a member should wear the BWC in a manner that is conspicuous and shall answer truthfully if asked whether they are equipped with a BWC or if their BWC is activated.

As soon as practicable, members shall verbally notify individuals that they are being recorded using a BWC. The notice should be captured on the recording or narrated by the member (50 ILCS 706/10-20; 720 ILCS 5/14-2).

### 435.5.2 PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS

Members should remain sensitive to the dignity of individuals being recorded and should exercise sound discretion with respect to privacy concerns.

Members may also mute or deactivate their BWC:

- (a) When an individual wishes to provide information anonymously.
- (b) To avoid recording a confidential informant or undercover officer.
- (c) When discussing case tactics or strategy.
- (d) During private conversations with other members or emergency responders.

Members shall deactivate their BWC when a victim, a witness, or a community member reporting a crime requests that the camera be turned off, unless exigent circumstances exist or the member has reasonable articulable suspicion that the individual has committed or is in the process of committing a crime. The individual's request to deactivate and the member's reason for continuing to record despite the request should be captured on the recording (50 ILCS 706/10-20).

Members should choose to mute rather than deactivate BWCs when practicable. Deactivation should only be used when muting the BWC will not accomplish the level of privacy necessary for the situation.

Before muting or deactivating their BWC, the member should verbally narrate the reason on the recording. As soon as possible once the privacy concern is no longer an issue, or when circumstances change so that the privacy concern no longer outweighs the department's interest in recording the event (e.g., the individual becomes combative, the conversation ends), the member should unmute or reactivate their BWC and verbally note that recording has resumed.

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### 435.5.3 LIVESTREAMING

Livestreaming enables authorized individuals to remotely view the audio and video captured by a member's BWC in real time. Only supervisors and telecommunicators approved by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee shall have access to livestreaming capabilities.

Livestreaming should only be activated:

- (a) For purposes of member safety when the member is not responding to their radio or there is some other indication of distress.
- (b) To assist with situational awareness or tactical decisions during a significant incident.
- (c) When requested by the member.

### 435.5.4 DOCUMENTATION

Members are encouraged to provide narration while using a BWC when it would be useful to provide context or clarification of the events being recorded. However, the use of a BWC is not a replacement for written reports and should not be referred to in a written report in place of detailing the event.

Every report prepared by a member who is issued a BWC should state "BWC Activated" or "BWC Not Activated," as applicable, and should document:

- (a) To the extent practicable and relevant, the identity of individuals appearing in the BWC media.
- (b) An explanation of why BWC media is unavailable including any malfunction, damage, or battery issue that resulted in the failure of the BWC to capture all or part of the event.
- (c) Any exigency or other circumstances that prevented the member from immediately activating the recording at the beginning of the event.
- (d) Any period of the event in which the member deactivated or muted their BWC and the reason for such action.

### 435.6 UPLOADING BWC MEDIA

Unless otherwise authorized by a supervisor, all media from a member's BWC should be properly uploaded and tagged before the end of their shift. BWC media related to a serious or high-profile event (e.g., search for a missing child, active shooter situation) should be uploaded and tagged as soon as practicable upon returning to the Department.

Following an officer involved shooting or death or other event deemed necessary, a supervisor should take possession of the BWC for each member present and upload and tag the BWC media.

#### 435.6.1 TAGGING BWC MEDIA

Members should tag all media captured by their BWC with their name and/or identification number, the case or incident number, and the event type. BWC media should be tagged upon uploading or, if capabilities permit tagging in the field, as close to the time of the event as possible. If more than one event type applies to BWC media, it should be tagged with each event type. If BWC

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media can only be tagged with a single event type, the media should be tagged using the event type with the longest retention period.

BWC media depicting sensitive circumstances or events should be tagged as restricted. BWC media should be flagged for supervisor review when it pertains to a significant event such as:

- (a) An incident that is the basis of a formal or informal complaint or is likely to result in a complaint.
- (b) When a member has sustained a serious injury or a line-of-duty death has occurred.
- (c) When a firearm discharge or use of force incident has occurred.
- (d) An event that has attracted or is likely to attract significant media attention.

Supervisors should conduct audits at regular intervals to confirm BWC media is being properly uploaded and tagged by their subordinates.

### **435.7 BWC MEDIA**

All BWC media is the sole property of the Department. Members shall have no expectation of privacy or ownership interest in the content of BWC media.

All BWC media shall be stored and transferred in a manner that is physically and digitally secure with appropriate safeguards to prevent unauthorized modification, use, release, or transfer. Contracts with any third-party vendors for the storage of BWC media should include provisions specifying that all BWC media remains the property of the Department and shall not be used by the vendor for any purpose without explicit approval of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

Members shall not alter, copy, delete, release, or permit access to BWC media other than as permitted in this policy without the express consent of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee (50 ILCS 706/10-20).

BWC media systems should not be accessed using personal devices unless authorized by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

#### **435.7.1 ACCESS AND USE OF BWC MEDIA**

BWC media systems shall only be accessed by authorized members using the member's own login credentials and in accordance with the Information Technology Use Policy.

BWC media shall only be accessed and viewed for legitimate department-related purposes in accordance with the following guidelines (50 ILCS 706/10-20):

- (a) BWC media tagged as restricted should only be accessible by those designated by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.
- (b) Members and their supervisors may review their own BWC media for department-related purposes and prior to completing incident reports or other documentation. However, members shall not review their BWC media or the BWC media of another member before completing their report or other documentation when the member has been involved in or is a witness to an officer-involved shooting, use of deadly force incident, or use of force incident resulting in great bodily harm; or is ordered to write

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a report in response to or during the investigation of a misconduct complaint against the member. In those instances, if the member prepared a report and subject to a supervisor's approval, they may file a supplemental report after reviewing BWC media and document that review in the supplemental report. In all other instances, members and supervisors should document in their report if they reviewed BWC media before completing the report.

- (c) Investigators may review BWC media pertaining to their assigned cases.
- (d) A member testifying regarding a department-related event may review the pertinent BWC media before testifying.
- (e) Supervisors are permitted to access and view BWC media of their subordinates.
  - 1. Supervisors should review BWC media that is tagged as a significant event or that the supervisor is aware pertains to a significant event.
  - 2. Supervisors should conduct documented reviews of their subordinate's BWC media to evaluate the member's performance, verify compliance with department procedures, and determine the need for additional training. The review should include a variety of event types when possible. Supervisors should review BWC media with the recording member when it would be beneficial to provide guidance or to conduct one-on-one informal training for the member.
  - 3. Supervisors should conduct periodic reviews of a sample of each subordinate's BWC media to evaluate BWC use and ensure compliance with this policy. Reviews of BWC media will be documented on the Body Worn Camera Review Form.
  - 4. Supervisors shall review all BWC media when there is a use of force.
- (f) The Deputy Chief of Operations is permitted to access and view BWC media for training purposes.
  - 1. The Deputy Chief of Operations should conduct a quarterly review of a random sampling of BWC media to evaluate department performance and effectiveness and to identify specific areas where additional training or changes to protocols would be beneficial. Training Committee members may review BWC media as part of their review to identify training needs.
  - 2. The Deputy Chief of Operations may use BWC media for training purposes with the approval of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. The Deputy Chief of Operations should use caution to avoid embarrassing or singling out a member and, to the extent practicable, should seek consent from the members appearing in the BWC media before its use for training. When practicable, sensitive issues depicted in BWC media should be redacted before being used for training.
- (g) The Deputy Chief of Administration may access BWC media when necessary to conduct department-related duties.
- (h) The BWC coordinator may access BWC media and the BWC media system as needed to ensure the system is functioning properly, provide troubleshooting assistance, conduct audits, and fulfill other responsibilities related to their role.

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- (i) A member's field training officer may access and review BWC media for training purposes.

### 435.7.2 PUBLIC ACCESS

Unless disclosure is required by law or a court order, BWC media should not be released to the public if it unreasonably violates a person's privacy or sense of dignity or depicts the interior of:

- (a) A private residence.
- (b) A facility that offers health care, mental health or substance abuse treatment, or social services.
- (c) A school building.
- (d) Any other building in which public access is restricted or which implicates heightened security concerns.

Requests for the release of BWC media shall be processed in accordance with the Records Maintenance and Release Policy and the Law Enforcement Officer-Worn Body Camera Act (50 ILCS 706/10-20). The Deputy Chief of Administration should review BWC media before public release.

### 435.8 RETENTION OF BWC MEDIA

BWC media should be retained on a BWC media system in accordance with state records retention laws but in no event for a period of less than 90 days. BWC media shall not be altered, erased, or destroyed prior to the expiration of the 90-day storage period. In the event any BWC media is altered, erased, or destroyed prior to the expiration of the 90-day storage period, the Deputy Chief of Administration shall maintain a written record including the name of the individual who made such alteration, erasure, or destruction, and the reason for any such alteration, erasure, or destruction for one year (50 ILCS 706/10-20).

After the 90-day storage period, BWC media must be destroyed unless any of the following occur (50 ILCS 706/10-20):

- (a) A formal or informal complaint has been filed.
- (b) The member discharged a firearm or used force during the encounter.
- (c) Death or great bodily harm occurred to any person in the BWC media.
- (d) The encounter resulted in a detention or arrest other than a traffic stop resulting in only a minor traffic offense or a petty offense with a fine of more than \$1,000.
- (e) The member is the subject of an internal investigation or otherwise being investigated for possible misconduct.
- (f) The supervisor of the member, prosecutor, defendant, or court determines that the encounter has evidentiary value in a criminal prosecution.
- (g) The recording member requests that the BWC media be retained for official purposes related to their official duties or believes that it may have evidentiary value in a criminal prosecution.

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Under these circumstances, the BWC media of the encounter shall not be altered or destroyed for two years. If the BWC media is used in a criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding, it shall not be destroyed except upon a final disposition and order from the court.

BWC media may be retained after the expiration of the 90-day storage period any time a supervisor designates it for training purposes and may be viewed by members, in the presence of a supervisor or training instructor, for the purposes of instruction, training, or ensuring compliance with department policies.

Unless circumstances justify continued retention, BWC media should be permanently deleted upon the expiration of the retention period in a way that it cannot be retrieved. BWC media shall not otherwise be deleted by any person without the authorization of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

### **435.9 TRAINING**

The BWC coordinator should ensure that each member issued a BWC receives initial training before use, and periodic refresher training thereafter. Training should include:

- (a) Proper use of the BWC device and accessories.
- (b) When BWC activation is required, permitted, and prohibited.
- (c) How to respond to an individual's request to stop recording.
- (d) Proper use of the BWC media systems, including uploading and tagging procedures.
- (e) Security procedures for BWC media, including appropriate access and use.

Members who are not issued a BWC but who have access to BWC media systems shall receive training on the BWC media system, including appropriate access, use, and security procedures.



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### Body Worn Camera Review Form

Per Lake Forest Police Department Policy 435 (Body-Worn Cameras), supervisors will randomly review at least three Body Worn Camera (BWC) videos each quarter for each officer. This practice helps ensure that equipment is operating properly and that officers are following Department Policy and State Law. Completed reviews shall be forwarded to the Body Worn Camera Coordinator.

Fiscal Year:	Quarter:	Employee:	Completing Supervisor:
<b>RECORDING 1</b>			
Incident/Case Number:	Incident Date:	Incident Time:	Incident Occurred Type:
Was the BWC Activated/Deactivated at the correct time? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Did the Employee give appropriate notice of recording? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Did the BWC work correctly? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Briefly describe the incident:			
<b>RECORDING 2</b>			
Incident/Case Number:	Incident Date:	Incident Time:	Incident Occurred Type:
Was the BWC Activated/Deactivated at the correct time? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Was appropriate notice of recording given? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Did the BWC work correctly? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Briefly describe the incident:			
<b>RECORDING 3</b>			
Incident/Case Number:	Incident Date:	Incident Time:	Incident Occurred Type:
Was the BWC Activated/Deactivated at the correct time? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Did the Employee give appropriate notice of recording? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Did the BWC work correctly? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Briefly describe the incident:			

**Additional Notes**