

Northamptonshire Police



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Releasing Body Worn Video footage

Reference Number	10/21	Version	1.0
Department Responsible	Corporate Communications		
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Effective Date	17 March 2021	GSC Marking	Official
Type	Policy	Last Reviewed	17 March 2021

1. Introduction

The existence of Body Worn Video footage has revolutionised policing, providing evidence of what police officers encounter when they attend an incident. Not only does this footage provide vital evidence for investigations, it can also help to expedite the resolution of complaints against police officers and staff.

There is a desire within Force to release Body Worn Video footage publically when it's appropriate and proportionate to do so, to help show the public what police officers and staff encounter while fulfilling their duty.

Not only will this help to demystify the work our officers and staff do, it will also help to offer reassurance and instil confidence in the public about the professionalism of our workforce.

2. Legislative Compliance

This document has been drafted to comply with the principals of the Human Rights Act. Proportionality has been identified as the key to Human Rights compliance, this means striking a fair balance between the rights of the individuals and those of the rest of the community. There must be a reasonable relationship between the aim to be achieved and the means used.

Equality and Diversity issues have also been considered to ensure compliance with current Equality Legislation and policies.

In addition, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Health Safety issues have been considered. Adherence to this policy or procedure will therefore ensure compliance with all legislation and internal policies.

3. Policy Statement

Body Worn Video footage must only be released when it's placement in the public domain won't impact on any legal or misconduct proceedings. We must ensure the release of BWV footage does not jeopardise any criminal proceedings, so discussions between Corporate Communications and the OIC/SIO are vital in order to prevent that from happening.

Release of any footage must be proportionate to the nature of the offence/incident.

Body Worn Video footage will only be released via Corporate Communications to ensure the relevant checks outlined in this policy are completed. Officers must not release their own footage via social media.

The below guidance is included in the College of Policing [Media Relations APP](#), and reflects the information included in the College of Policing [Body Worn Video APP](#).

Body-worn video (BWV) footage is covered by existing protocols on releasing footage. It may be released to the prosecution during a trial, as instructed by the judge, or for another genuine policing purpose such as an appeal.

The police may wish to release BWV images to the media for a number of reasons, including tracing wanted suspects, locating people who have escaped or absconded from custody and post-conviction demands for information. The images could relate to a heroic act where the person saved is happy to be identified, or could serve an educational purpose. The release of BWV images to the media must always be proportionate, necessary and for a legitimate purpose. Forces must make each decision on a case-by-case basis and should carry out early consultation with criminal justice partners, where appropriate.

Where images are shared with the media to identify any person shown in the images, forces must take care to obscure other persons shown in the recording whose identity is not sought.

All decisions to release images and the reasons for doing so should be recorded, along with any risk assessment. Records relating to the release of images as part of an investigation may be subject to disclosure under the [Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996](#).

Information Assurance

Body Worn Videos gather personal data of members of the public, including victims, witnesses and suspects and it's vital that we follow the correct guidance in how we handle that data.

We must make sure to have permission from members of the public, police officers and staff featured in BWV footage in order to release their image. If we do not have a person's permission to release their image, we must blur them out of the footage. If a victim (including police officer or member of staff) doesn't want the footage to be released then we won't release it.

We do not need permission when a person has been convicted of an offence to release their image, so long as they have been given a custodial sentence of more than 12 months – in line with the Force's policy on the release of custody images.

A copy of the Force's BWV Privacy Notice is available to read [here](#).

Pre-release checklist for Corporate Communications:

- Consult with the OIC/SIO who **must** sign off the release of the footage, along with the Head of Corporate Communications
- Consult with the Crown Prosecution Service if there is a request to release BWV footage prior to an arrest
- Consult with the IOPC if there is a request to release footage that is or likely to be part of an IOPC investigation
- Ensure the footage has been edited sufficiently, including any blurring of faces and muting of background noise when required – don't identify suspects prior to conviction
- When moving footage is unsuitable for publication, consideration must be given for the release of stills instead
- Keep a record of the footage accessed in the BWV folder and provide a log of what has been viewed and why. A log is available to update here - W:\HQ Wootton Hall\News and Publishing\Policies\BWV

4. Monitoring and review

The senior owner will review the content of this guidance annually to ensure that this is relevant and up to date. The author has agreed that this document will be reviewed within 12 months of the effective date.