

BGPD Body Worn Camera Audit

Objective

Are Bowling Green Police officers using body-worn cameras in accordance with BGPD policies including uploading and categorizing videos timely and completely capturing serious events?

Scope

The audit scope contained BGPD body worn camera videos and related records from July 1, 2019 through December 21, 2020. It also contained a snapshot of unassigned videos on March 15, 2021.

Background

In 2016, Bowling Green Police Department (BGPD) implemented a body worn camera system to “enhance the public’s trust by preserving factual representations of officer-citizen interactions in the form of video and audio recordings, strengthening departmental transparency and reducing complaints.” This system is in addition to the in-car camera system in order to allow documentation of interactions outside of the vehicle for patrol division interactions and to allow for supervisory review of officer-citizen contacts, critical incidents and other interactions with the public.

What Was Found

Videos are uploaded by utilizing docking stations within the building. BGPD policy states that uploading “should be completed in a timely manner or following any incident of a serious nature” and that “officers will make every reasonable attempt” to do so “before the end of each shift.” In practice, officers are expected to upload before the end of their work week. Utilizing a seven day period as baseline, 109,425 videos from 7/1/2019 through 12/31/20 were analyzed. Routinely docking the unit uploads the videos and is required to sync the date and timestamp of the camera with the system. If the battery fully discharges without a fresh sync to the system, it will default back to 2016 when the system was implemented.



<u>Days to Upload</u>	<u>No. of Videos</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Within 7 Days	84,999	77.68%
8-14 Days	12,326	11.26%
15-30 Days	8,671	7.92%
31-60 Days	2,682	2.45%
61-90 Days	267	0.24%
Over 90 days	235	0.21%
Error Records to 2016	245	0.22%
	109,425	100.00%

BGPD Body Worn Camera Audit (Cont.)

What Was Found (cont.)

Once videos are uploaded, the officer must change it from the default “unassigned” category to the appropriate label based on the type of event and attach to any relating report. The tagging and identification of the videos are important because it determines the retention of the video, provides a full account of the officers citizen related contact and provides supervisory review of interactions and events. A snapshot of unassigned videos from March 15, 2021 was analyzed and contained 7,766 videos from the old Echo body worn cameras which went out of use in 2018 and 4,711 from the current Focus X1 cameras. The upload dates range are shown in the table to the right.

BGPD management was not aware of the volume of unassigned videos ranging back to 2016 were sitting in the system waiting to be categorized due to current reporting limitations. The videos are from current and prior/retired officers and must be searched by each specific officers listing of videos within the system.

Supervisory review of videos was described in detail by management providing an acceptable level of confidence that review is taking place, but was unable to test due to reporting constraints.

Focus X Current Camera System

Upload Date Range	# Records	% Records
3/26/2018-12/31/2018	73	1.55%
1/1/2019-12/31/2019	549	11.65%
1/1/2020-12/31/2020	1,540	32.69%
1/1/2021-1/31/2021	245	5.20%
2/1/2021-2/28/2021	982	20.84%
3/1/2021-3/15/2021	1,322	28.06%
	<u>4,711</u>	<u>100.00%</u>

Old Echo Camera System

Upload Date Range	# Records	% Records
11/27/2016-12/31/2016	26	0.33%
1/1/2017-12/31/2017	3,085	39.72%
01/01/201/-8/4/2018	4,655	59.94%
	<u>7,766</u>	<u>100.00%</u>

Risks and Recommendations

Delays in uploading or tagging videos impacts the ability of supervisors to fully review incidents and prevents the full event from being available for potential officer complaints, open record requests or court proceedings.

Officers should be required to upload and tag according to policy. Management review should include timeliness of video upload and categorizing to ensure adherence to BGPD policy. Transitioning to in-car docking stations with upload capabilities, as allowed in the budget process, would also improve uploading times by automatically uploading when officers arrived on site at the police station.

Management should review the body camera portion of BGPD policy and update to remove old terminology and to ensure that procedures match requirements within the policy. Management should also work with the City’s Information Technology Department to enhance reporting capabilities to enhance supervisory review and monitoring of videos. Cleanup of any remaining videos should be included in the separation and retirement planning for any officers leaving the department.