

## **Body-Worn Cameras (BWC)**

### **424.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This policy provides guidelines for the use of portable audio/video recording devices by members of this department while in the performance of their duties. Portable audio/video recording devices include all recording systems whether body-worn, hand-held or integrated into portable equipment.

This policy does not apply to mobile audio/video recordings, interviews or interrogations conducted at any Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety facility, authorized undercover operations, wiretaps or eavesdropping (concealed listening devices).

### **424.2 POLICY**

The Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety may provide members with access to portable recorders, either audio or video or both, for use during the performance of their duties. The use of recorders is intended to enhance the mission of the Department by accurately capturing contacts between members of the Department and the public.

### **424.3 COORDINATOR**

The Service Division Commander shall act as the BWC coordinator and is responsible for:

- (a) Establishing procedures for the security, storage and maintenance of data and recordings.
- (b) Establishing procedures for accessing data and recordings.
- (c) Establishing procedures for logging or auditing access.
- (d) Establishing procedures for transferring, downloading, tagging or marking events.

### **424.4 MEMBER PRIVACY EXPECTATION**

All recordings made by members on any department-issued device at any time, and any recording made while acting in an official capacity of this department, regardless of ownership of the device it was made on, shall remain the property of the Department. Members shall have no expectation of privacy or ownership interest in the content of these recordings.

### **424.5 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Prior to going into service, each uniformed member will be responsible for making sure that he/she is equipped with a portable recorder, issued by the Department, and that the recorder is in good working order. If the recorder is not in working order or the member becomes aware of a malfunction at any time, the member shall promptly report the failure to his/her supervisor and obtain a functioning device as soon as reasonably practicable. Uniformed members should wear the recorder in a conspicuous manner. Cameras shall be attached to the torso facing forward on the outer most piece of clothing per the manufacturers guidelines.

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Body Worn Cameras shall be worn by all personnel assigned to the Operations Division, as well as personnel assigned to other divisions where a body worn camera has been directed to be worn. Plain-clothes officers operating outside of a station and taking enforcement action (i.e. arrest, suspect contact, search warrant, etc.) shall wear their body worn cameras. In addition, body worn cameras shall be worn by all personnel working special events or overtime assignments and whenever a supervisor directs an officer to do so.

Unless conducting a lawful recording in an authorized undercover capacity, non-uniformed members should wear the recorder in a conspicuous manner when in use or otherwise notify persons that they are being recorded, whenever reasonably practicable.

KVET officers shall adhere to this policy, with the following exception: KVET Body Worn Cameras shall not be activated until their vehicle is well away from the KVET office and shall be turned off immediately prior to returning to the KVET office.

When using a recorder, the assigned member shall record his/her name, KDPS identification number and the current date and time at the beginning and the end of the shift or other period of use, regardless of whether any activity was recorded. This procedure is not required when the recording device and related software captures the user's unique identification and the date and time of each recording.

Members should document the existence of a recording in any report or other official record of the contact, including any instance where the recorder malfunctioned or the member deactivated the recording. Members should include the reason for deactivation.

#### **424.6 ACTIVATION OF THE AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDER**

This policy is not intended to describe every possible situation in which the recorder should be used, although there are many situations where its use is appropriate. Members should activate the recorder any time the member believes it would be appropriate or valuable to record an incident.

The recorder should be activated in any of the following situations:

- (a) All enforcement and investigative contacts including stops and field interview situations
- (b) Traffic stops including, but not limited to, traffic violations, stranded motorist assistance and all crime interdiction stops
- (c) Self-initiated activity in which a public safety officer would normally notify Dispatch
- (d) Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording
- (e) Prisoner Transports
- (f) All emergency responses or vehicle pursuits
- (g) All other duty-related official contact with the public

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Members should remain sensitive to the dignity of all individuals being recorded and exercise sound discretion to respect privacy by discontinuing recording whenever it reasonably appears to the member that such privacy may outweigh any legitimate law enforcement interest in recording. Requests by members of the public to stop recording should be considered using this same criterion. Recording should resume when privacy is no longer at issue unless the circumstances no longer fit the criteria for recording.

At no time is a member expected to jeopardize his/her safety in order to activate a portable recorder or change the recording media. However, the recorder should be activated in situations described above as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### 424.6.1 CESSATION OF RECORDING

Once activated, the BWC shall not be deactivated until the operator has disengaged contact with a witness, complainant, victim, or suspect with the following exceptions:

- (a) Approved by a supervisor
- (b) If the recording of the event will compromise the safety of a civilian or an officer or if an officer is interacting with a member of the public or another officer in a matter of exceedingly sensitive or private nature (i.e. CSC victim) or place.
- (c) An informant providing intelligence of criminal activity.
- (d) Encounters with undercover officers
- (e) Death notifications
- (f) Locker rooms, bathrooms, unless part of a crime scene.
- (g) Privileged conversations with counsel or clergy.
- (h) Court appearances

#### 424.6.2 SURREPTITIOUS USE OF THE AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDER

Michigan law permits an individual to surreptitiously record any conversation in which one party to the conversation has given his/her permission. Members may surreptitiously record any conversation during the course of a criminal investigation in which the member reasonably believes that such a recording will be lawful and beneficial to the investigation.

Members shall not surreptitiously record another department member without a court order unless lawfully authorized by the Chief of Public Safety or the authorized designee.

#### 424.6.3 EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

Many portable recorders, including body-worn cameras and audio/video transmitters, emit radio waves that could trigger an explosive device. Therefore, these devices should not be used where an explosive device may be present.

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### **424.7 PROHIBITED USE OF PORTABLE RECORDERS**

Members are prohibited from using department-issued portable recorders and recording media for personal use and are prohibited from making personal copies of recordings created while on-duty or while acting in an official capacity.

Members are also prohibited from retaining recordings of activities or information obtained while on-duty, whether the recording was created with department-issued or personally owned recorders. Members shall not duplicate or distribute such recordings, except for authorized legitimate department business purposes. All such recordings shall be retained at the Department.

Members are prohibited from using personally owned recording devices while on-duty without the express consent of the Shift Commander. Any member who uses a personally owned recorder for department-related activities shall comply with the provisions of this policy, including retention and release requirements, and should notify the on-duty supervisor of such use as soon as reasonably practicable.

Recordings shall not be used by any member for the purpose of embarrassment, harassment or ridicule.

### **424.8 IDENTIFICATION AND PRESERVATION OF RECORDINGS**

To assist with identifying and preserving data and recordings, members should download, tag or mark these in accordance with procedure and document the existence of the recording in any related case report.

A member should transfer, tag or mark recordings when the member reasonably believes:

- (a) The recording contains evidence relevant to potential criminal, civil or administrative matters.
- (b) A complainant, victim or witness has requested non-disclosure.
- (c) A complainant, victim or witness has not requested non-disclosure but the disclosure of the recording may endanger the person.
- (d) Disclosure may be an unreasonable violation of someone's privacy.
- (e) Medical or mental health information is contained.
- (f) Disclosure may compromise an undercover officer or confidential informant.

If an officer thinks the camera recording is of evidentiary value to their investigation, the officer shall complete a **"VIDEO RETENTION FORM"** located on the KDPS Intranet under the FORMS header.

### **424.9 RETENTION OF RECORDINGS**

All recordings shall be retained for a period consistent with the requirements of the established records retention schedule but in no event for a period less than 60 days.

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All recordings that are the subject of ongoing criminal, administrative or civil investigations or legal proceedings shall be retained until the completion of the investigation or proceeding (MCL 780.316).

All recordings relevant to a formal complaint against a member or the Department in general shall be retained for a period consistent with the requirements of the established records retention schedule but in no event for a period less than three years (MCL 780.316).

#### 424.9.1 RELEASE OF AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS

Requests for the release of audio/video recordings shall be processed in accordance with the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.

#### **424.10 REVIEW OF RECORDED MEDIA FILES**

The viewing and/or copying of any recordings shall only be done for official departmental use. When preparing written reports, members should review their recordings as a resource. (See the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths Policy for guidance in those cases.) However, members shall not retain personal copies of recordings. Members should not use the fact that a recording was made as a reason to write a less detailed report.

Supervisors are authorized to review relevant recordings any time they are investigating alleged misconduct or reports of meritorious conduct or whenever such recordings would be beneficial in reviewing a member's performance.

Recorded files may also be reviewed:

- (a) Upon approval by a supervisor, by any member of the Department who is participating in an official investigation, such as a personnel complaint, administrative investigation or criminal investigation.
- (b) Pursuant to lawful process or by court personnel who are otherwise authorized to review evidence in a related case.
- (c) By media personnel with permission of the Chief of Public Safety or the authorized designee.
- (d) In compliance with a public records request, if permitted, and in accordance with the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.
- (e) Training Division may review and utilize recordings that may contain material suitable for training purposes. The Training Division may not use any recording or portion of a recording without the approval of the Chief of Public Safety or designee and the officers involved in the recording.

All recordings should be reviewed by the Custodian of Records prior to public release (see the Records Maintenance and Release Policy). Recordings that unreasonably violate a person's privacy should not be publicly released unless disclosure is required by law or order of the court.

#### **424.11 ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW**

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The department recognizes that officers often become engaged in dynamic situations in which it may not be practical to activate the BWC, i.e. spontaneous foot chases, unexecuted altercations, etc. However, officers shall make every attempt to comply with this policy without compromising their safety or that of others.

Persons reviewing recordings must be cautious before conclusions are reached about what the video shows. The standard used should be that of an “objectively reasonable” officer based on the totality of the facts and circumstances.

When evaluating the unique perspective of the BWC, one must consider the following:

- (a) The camera does not follow the officer’s eyes.
- (b) Some danger cues cannot be recorded, i.e. noise or movement such as a subject reaching under a car seat.
- (c) The officers level of experience and history.
- (d) Camera recordings are only two-dimensional.
- (e) Extended hands and arms may block views at critical times.
- (f) Cameras do not utilize human senses.
- (g) Cameras cannot record perceptual distortion and/or other normal reactions to stress.
- (h) The human brain processes the movement of people and objects differently than a digital recorder.

The review and use of the BWC is not intended to replace witness testimony, forensics, officer’s statements, or any objective facet of an investigation.