



Rochester Police Department

Office of the Chief

Michael L. Ciminelli



Media Release

November 17, 2016

We have received a number of media inquiries regarding our Body Worn Camera (BWC) policy as a result of a press conference held today by the Rochester Coalition for Police Reform. We appreciate the Coalition's interest and involvement in our BWC program. We have met regularly with the Coalition to discuss the BWC program, and have made several changes to our policy in response to their concerns. We will continue our dialogue regarding the BWC program with the Coalition and other interested groups and individuals.

Our policy is available for review on the City of Rochester's website at:

<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/RPDBodyWornCamera/>.

Following are responses to the specific questions or concerns from the Coalition's press conference, as we have received them:

Officers don't have an incentive to turn cameras on.

This is not correct. Our policy includes mandatory provisions which require officers to activate and record with the BWC in specified situations. Failure to comply with this mandatory policy is subject to departmental discipline in accordance with the Civil Service Law and our collective bargaining agreement.

Our initial experience is that RPD officers are complying with the BWC policy. For example, during the period of October 3 – November 3, 2016, with the number of cameras deployed increasing from about 30 to about 155, officers recorded 16,821 individual videos.

Officers have the ability to view incidents on tape before they write a report (as opposed to going off memory of the incident).

We understand that the Coalition does not agree with our policy on this point. However, we believe it reflects the best practice to ensure accuracy of reports. Most departments around the country that utilize BWCs allow officers to view BWC videos to assist in writing accurate reports. Also, the model policies recommended by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) allow this.

For more information or media requests please contact the Rochester Police Department
Public Information Officer – Investigator Jacqueline Shuman at 585-370-4575

mediarequest@cityofrochester.gov

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No clear path for access to footage (for citizens to request/get a copy) in a criminal proceeding.

This is not correct. For any arrest the defendant is entitled to copies of relevant BWC video through the criminal discovery process. RPD has established a process to provide the District Attorney's Office with BWC video relevant to their criminal prosecutions, and has conducted a training session for Assistant District Attorneys on this. In addition, RPD has also conducted a training session for attorneys from the Public Defender's Office to educate them on the BWC system, and how to obtain BWC video for their cases. A similar session is currently scheduled for the Monroe County Bar Association in December.

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