



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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VICKI L. HENNESSY
SHERIFF

February 9, 2017
Reference: 2017-017

The Honorable Malia Cohen
Chair, Budget and Finance Committee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102

Subject: Release of Body-Worn-Camera Program-Funding from Reserves

Dear Supervisor Cohen,


The Sheriff's Department respectfully requests that the Budget and Finance Committee release \$135,000 on reserves in the department's budget for fiscal year 2016-17. The Budget and Finance Committee placed \$135,000 of the Body Worn Camera Program budget on reserves as part of the fiscal year 2016-17 Annual Appropriation Ordinance. The Budget Analyst recommended the reserve until the sheriff's department developed a Body-Worn-Camera program.

The Sheriff's Department has worked for the past six months to develop a pilot program for body-worn cameras to be used in the jails, beginning with County Jail #4 at the Hall of Justice. A copy of that program, which I have reviewed and approved, is attached.

The Office of Contract Administration has approved Taser International to provide the Body Worn Camera system. Once funding is released a purchase order will be issued.

Releasing the reserve funds will ensure a smooth and timely implementation of the Body Worn Camera Program.

Sincerely,


VICKI L. HENNESSY
Sheriff

cc: Angela Calvillo, Harvey Rose, Ben Rosenfield, Melissa Whitehouse

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**SAN FRANCISCO
SHERIFF**

BODY WORN CAMERA PILOT PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 2017



The San Francisco Sheriff Department's (SFSD) is initiating a pilot program to test the use of **Body Worn Cameras** (BWC) in the county jails to promote transparency and accountability.

Use of these devices will provide video and audio documentation of jail operations.

PILOT PROGRAM GOALS:

To achieve an appropriate balance between the benefits of a BWC and reasonable expectations of privacy for all involved parties:

- Inmates - Contractors
- Employees - Visitors
- Deputies

The objective of this pilot program is to ensure proper use of these cameras, and gather data and information to evaluate the viability of the technology to promote the Department's mission, and protect the rights of deputies and inmates.



Q: What is a body worn camera?

A: A small, battery-powered video camera worn by police officers either on their uniform or on eyewear.

Q: What kind of cameras will SFSD test?

A: SFSD Deputies are using cameras made by TASER, based in Scottsdale, Arizona. SFSD is trying out the same systems being tested by the New York Police Department and in use with the SFPD and the Los Angeles Police Department.

Q: What does the camera system do?

A: Taser's cameras, which use standard definition video, record video and sound at the touch of a button. They can be worn on both eyewear and uniforms. The system offers cloud-based video storage (i.e. uploaded through the internet and stored on secure off-site servers). The system also has options to store video on existing SFSD servers.

Q. How many cameras are SFSD testing?

A: Thirty Deputies from County Jail 4 will test the Taser camera system.



Taser Axon 2



Q: Why are Deputies wearing cameras?

A: To capture video of routine and critical interactions with others in jail facilities in order to provide increased transparency and accountability for both employees and inmates.

A recent report by the US Department of Justice found that most research on the use of body-worn cameras *“document a reduction in citizen complaints against the police and, in some cases, similar reductions in use of force and assaults on officers.”*

Q. How will I know if I’m being recorded by a body worn video camera?

A: In addition to verbal notification, an indicator light will turn on when the camera is activated. Signs will be posted at jail entry and throughout the jail facility reminding both staff and inmates that they may be on video tape.



Q. Are there places in the jail where officers will not use the cameras?

A: Deputies won’t record in places where an expectation of privacy exists, such as restrooms or hospitals — unless there’s reasonable suspicion a crime is being committed or the recording of the location is material to a criminal investigation.



Q: Could the video be tampered with or altered by a deputy sheriff or anyone else?

A: No. The system is designed with security "hash tags" that will mark the original videos, so that any alteration can be identified.

Q. Can the videos be viewed by the public?

A: State law allows the public to only request video footage through a public records request.

Q. Can the deputy review the video prior to writing his/her report?

A. As part of the pilot program, the department has adopted the same criteria approved for the San Francisco Police Department which allows deputies to view the video for investigative purposes. In critical incidents, however, the deputy will be required to submit an initial statement prior to reviewing the video.

Q. Have the impacted unions agreed to the Body Worn Camera policy?

A. The draft BWC policy has gone across the table to both the impacted unions and other stakeholders. Discussions are ongoing.



REQUIRED USE ACTIVATIONS

- ▶ Cell Extraction for non-compliant inmates
- ▶ Inmate fights
- ▶ Safety cell placement involving uses of force
- ▶ Response to an emergency call (deputy call for assistance)
- ▶ Use of force including but not limited to:
 - ▶ *Defense of self from an attack by an inmate, or*
 - ▶ *to protect the physical wellbeing of another, or*
 - ▶ *to prevent or stop an act that affects the general safety and security*
 - ▶ *other exigent circumstances requiring an immediate response*

Deputies will make reasonable efforts to activate the BWC prior to making contact in required use situations.



DISCRETIONARY USE

Deputies may activate the BWC at his / her discretion to record any contact where recording is not required. It is recommended that a sworn employee record any contact that could later be used as evidence.

Deputies shall deactivate the device once the incident or contact has concluded. This would include the sworn employee leaving the scene or the natural completion of the event.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

In the event of an incident requiring use of the BWC in an area where there is a general expectation of privacy, precautions will be taken to protect the dignity of the victim and uninvolved parties, such as the avoidance of recording nudity and sensitive areas, if possible.



Review of pilot program measurable data will be conducted every other month (3 times) by a **BWC Pilot Review Committee** composed of staff determined by the Sheriff. The following metrics will be evaluated:

- Department-wide training issues
- Privacy issues
- Impacts on use-of-force situations
- Adjudication of Internal Affairs complaints
- Impacts on prosecution of criminal cases
- Evaluation of the BWC instrument and software

RECOMMENDED MEMBERS OF THE **BWC PILOT REVIEW COMMITTEE** SHOULD INCLUDE REPRESENTATION FROM THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

SHERIFF'S LEGAL COUNSEL
UNDERSHERIFF
CHIEF DEPUTY OF CUSTODY OPERATIONS DIVISION
DSA/TEST GROUP MEMBER
MSA/TEST GROUP MEMBER
DPH REPRESENTATIVE
OTHER IDENTIFIED STAKEHOLDERS