



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
M E M O R A N D U M

Date: June 24, 2021
To: David Nisleit, Chief, San Diego Police Department
From: Brandon Hilpert, Chair, Commission on Police Practices *BH*
via Sharmaine Moseley, Interim Executive Director *SM*
Subject: Concern Regarding Officers Failing to Activate Body Worn Cameras

As the City of San Diego's police oversight Commission, it is our responsibility to raise concerns when we observe law enforcement officers failing to follow SDPD policy and procedures, and to make recommendations for corrective action.

During the review of community generated complaints by the Commission on Police Practices (CPP), we have observed a consistent increase of cases where officers fail to honor the spirit and intent of SDPD [Procedure 1.49, Axon Body Worn Cameras](#) either through forgetfulness, carelessness or by being preoccupied.

This procedure is in place to create a record of enforcement contacts which protects both the public and officers. As you know, BWC (Body Worn Cameras) evidence frequently clears officers of accusations of wrongdoing. Over the last year or so, we have observed multiple officers, across all divisions, who have failed to activate their BWCs as required per procedure.

In fact, we have frequently seen officers not have their BWCs turned on (in buffering or stand-by mode) as they begin their shifts. This prevents the BWC from recording the two-minute video buffer prior to the officer physically activating their BWC in "event mode." We know that the two-minute buffer can capture valuable details which can help illustrate the situation more clearly, especially in circumstances where events escalate quickly.

The Commission, therefore, recommends that:

- Command Staff shall perform a roll call/line up training within the next 30 days reminding officers of the BWC requirements on when recording shall start

- Issue a training bulletin to all SDPD staff reminding of the requirements set forth in Procedure 1.49
- Include mandatory BWC training in all department regular Advanced Officer Training (AOT) training (every 2 years)
- Supervisory command staff shall audit compliance by physically reviewing BWC videos, rather than just confirming X number of videos aligns with X number of enforcement contacts during a shift
- Consider incentives for officers that consistently and properly follow BWC procedures

The Commission believes that being able to properly record evidence of enforcement contacts is paramount for officers to be able to record and document an event. It also allows and facilitates the Commission's review of community complaints. We have found BWC evidence to be an invaluable resource in our work of oversight and we look forward to officers continuing to record events as required per policy.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at BHilpert@sandiego.gov.



Brandon Hilpert, Chair
Commission on Police Practices

Digital Enclosure: [SDPD Procedure 1.49](#)

cc: Honorable Mayor Todd Gloria
Jay Goldstone, Chief Operating Officer
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