

CHECKLIST: Implementing Body-Worn Cameras

Adopting body-worn cameras (BWCs) for a police department is a serious decision. Here's a checklist based on experience from jurisdictions that have done it.

- Do your homework. Assess your needs and expectations. Gather information. Learn from other jurisdictions. Tap resources from the [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#). See these [lessons learned](#).
- Educate, inform, and consider opinions from stakeholders—the police chief and officers at all levels, chief appointed officials, elected officials, and the community at large.
- Don't rush it. Ensure that you have buy-in before implementing a BWC program. Then consider a pilot period and, once you decide to go ahead, consider implementing the program in phases.
- Be realistic about cost and be sure everyone involved is fully aware of what to expect. Hardware is only the beginning. Video needs to be catalogued, stored, and made available, often in redacted form.
- Craft a careful RFP. Do you want a subscription arrangement? Or do you want to own the equipment and manage it internally? How do you want to handle video storage? Do you want to require a trial period? A warranty/service agreement?
- Develop a BWC policy. Who will wear the cameras? When will they be turned on? Who can access the footage? How can it be used? Submit the draft policy for legal review to be sure it's compatible with state or other legal requirements.
- Provide for training. Officers need to be thoroughly trained so that they understand the policy and know how to use the equipment properly. Find out if your potential vendors have resources to supplement your in-house training.
- Once the program is up and running, be ready to manage expectations and deal openly with any issues that may emerge.