

# **BODY-WORN CAMERA USAGE**

**A Report to the Virginia General Assembly**



**November 1, 2024**

**Colonel Gary T. Settle  
Superintendent**



# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Colonel Gary T. Settle  
Superintendent

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**DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE**  
P. O. Box 27472, Richmond, VA 23261-7472

Lt. Colonel Kirk S. Marlowe  
Deputy Superintendent

November 1, 2024

TO: The Honorable L. Louise Lucas  
Chair of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Luke E. Torian  
Chair of the House Appropriations Committee

Pursuant to 2024 Acts of Assembly Chapter 2, Item 417 E, I am respectfully submitting herewith a report concerning the Department's body-camera usage and estimated costs.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary T. Settle".

Superintendent

GTS/RCM/

Enclosure

## **Preface**

The Department of State Police is directed to “provide a report to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, no later than November 1, 2024, on current usage and estimated costs of body-worn cameras by sworn personnel. The report shall include: (i) a description of the Department’s current usage of body-worn cameras, including an assessment of associated costs and benefits; (ii) the estimated cost of deploying body-cameras for all sworn officers, including associated workload impacts; and (iii) a description of the advantages and limitations of the dash cameras currently used by the Department.”

## **Background**

In 2023, the Department replaced its antiquated fleet of in-car cameras, for which replacement parts were no longer available, with a Motorola in-car camera system utilizing the latest technology. This camera system, which is currently installed in approximately 1,200 patrol vehicles,<sup>1</sup> can integrate with a body-worn camera (BWC) system to capture more interactions with the public. Leveraging the new in-car camera platform has decreased the acquisition cost of BWCs considerably, making it possible for VSP to acquire a small number of BWCs for high-risk operations. Currently, the Department has 300 such cameras, which were purchased to replace an older set of BWCs that were not compatible with our in-car camera system. These cameras are issued to the seven field divisions (200), the Special Operations Division (90), and the Special Investigations and Projects Division (10). The Special Operations Division tactical team members utilize these BWCs on a consistent basis due to the high-risk nature of their assignments and the need for transparency. The BWCs allocated to the field divisions and the Special Investigations and Projects Division are dedicated for use during specific high-risk assignments.

BWCs have been utilized in recent years to support the Operation Bold Blue Line (OBBL) violent crime reduction initiative in thirteen cities across the Commonwealth. These initiatives included efforts in Petersburg City during the summer of 2023 and the 2023 and 2024 Richmond City “Safe Summer” initiatives. Each sworn member assigned to these initiatives utilized a BWC while on duty. Footage from arrests during these initiatives is turned over to the Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Offices to assist in prosecution.

The Department’s Tactical Field Force (TFF) utilizes BWCs when deployed to assist local police agencies with mass gatherings or protests. Based on the number of BWCs available, the TFF platoons divide BWCs between TFF squads to document declarations of unlawful assemblies, TFF movements, and protestor actions and encounters. Most recently, BWCs were used during the Spring 2024 protests on college campuses and during encounters with individuals protesting the construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline project in southwest Virginia. The footage assists in the prosecution of those

<sup>1</sup> This in-car camera system is currently being installed in an additional 250 specialized patrol and enforcement vehicles. This will bring the total fleet of vehicles with in-car camera systems to 1,450 by the end of 2024.

charged with violations of law. In addition, this video footage has been used to directly contradict false claims made against department members, thereby serving to protect not only the sworn member, but also the Commonwealth from possible criminal and civil action.

The BWCs have proven beneficial when personnel are away from the in-car cameras installed in the Department's patrol vehicles. The BWCs provide transparency, documentation of events, and evidence to support or rebut claims made against the Department and our personnel.

### Equipment Expense

Fully equipping our workforce of 2,189 sworn employees with BWCs requires 1,889 additional BWCs. The total costs of this procurement are reflected in the table below, based on a 10-year contract.

<b>Equipment Costs</b>		
Equipment Type	Year One	Outyears 2-10
BWC Hardware	\$1,380,580	\$0
Software	\$1,734,764	\$1,734,764
Verizon SIM Cards	\$770,712	\$770,712
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,886,056</b>	<b>\$2,505,476 per year</b>

Of the total number of sworn employees, 1,741 have frequent interactions with the public during enforcement or other high-liability operations. Equipping only these sworn members with BWCs (1,441 new cameras) would reduce the overall expense proportionally.

### Workload Impacts

The Department's Office of Legal Affairs is responsible for processing requests for records, which includes Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, subpoenas duces tecum, discovery requests, interagency inquires, and guardian ad litem orders. In 2024, VSP is on pace to receive over 11,000 such requests, and approximately 60% of them require reviewing videos for potential redactions. This review currently requires 30-60 minutes of staff time for every hour of video, and results in a total average processing time for FOIAs that include video evidence of 1.5 hours.

However, the Department's current FOIA workload only requires review of trooper dash camera footage. These cameras are mounted on the windshield area of the trooper's car and record from a fixed position. A body worn camera will be on the sworn employee's body and the camera view will constantly be changing with the movement of the trooper, potentially capturing much more personally identifiable information and other confidential or protected information. Incidents involving multiple troopers and special agents will also dramatically increase the amount of video to be reviewed. These factors are expected to increase the total staff time for review and redaction of video by a factor of 2.5. Adding

an additional 1,889 body worn cameras will therefore require an additional supervisor (FOIA Specialist), and 8 Redaction Specialists (FTE Program Support Technician Senior) positions to manage the workload. The cost of this additional staffing is as follows:

<b>Personnel Costs</b>		
Item	Upfront Cost	Outyear Cost
1 FOIA Specialist Position	\$132,621	\$132,621
8 Program Support Technician Sr. Positions	\$788,670	\$788,670
Office Space	\$71,799	\$71,799
Furniture	\$45,495	\$0
IT Hardware	\$19,548	\$14,940
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,058,133</b>	<b>\$1,008,030</b>

Significantly, the position costs do not decrease in proportion to the number of cameras purchased. Even if all sworn employees are equipped with BWCs, the vast majority of FOIA requests requiring video review and redaction will continue to be traffic accidents and other incidents handled by troopers. Therefore, the first 1,200 BWCs are responsible for 100% of the personnel costs in this estimate.

### **Conclusion**

The Department currently installs an in-car camera system in all patrol trooper and sergeant vehicles. The in-car cameras are beneficial for providing evidence during court testimony and to document interactions while on patrol. As previously mentioned, the downside to the in-car camera system is that it only captures a fixed view to the front of the vehicle and does not provide a true representation of what the vehicle operator sees while driving. Additionally, the in-car camera system provides no benefit when the sworn member is away from the front of their vehicle or while on assignments such as a civil disturbances. While BWCs are of limited use while driving due to their position on the trooper's chest, they do provide a more accurate account of what the trooper is witnessing when out of the vehicle.

Fully equipping VSP sworn personnel with BWCs will require 9 positions and \$5,944,189 in the first year and \$3,513,506 in the outyears.



October 22, 2024

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas  
Chair, Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee  
Senate of Virginia, General Assembly Building, 13th Floor  
201 N. 9th Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Luke E. Torian  
Chair, House Appropriations Committee  
Virginia House of Delegates, General Assembly Building, 12th Floor  
201 N. 9th Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Virginia State Police & Body Worn Cameras

Dear Senator Lucas and Delegate Torian,

As your committees consider a Virginia State Police (VSP) report regarding the fiscal impact of its possible expanded use of body worn cameras (BWC), the Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys (VACA) requests our 120 offices be included in the associated workload impact category. Any increase of BWCs utilized by a state agency will result in additional resources and corresponding funding being needed by our offices. This is due to BWC usage producing videos which are evidence requiring our review and handling. Such resources include but are not limited to prosecutor and support staff positions, technology equipment, case management platforms, and digital evidence storage.

Documentation of these additional resources being necessary for our offices, which followed implementation of BWCs in localities, is found in a 2018 report to the General Assembly and a 2019 budget amendment. These documents are available as noted below. Now that BWCs have deployed en masse, we submit it is clear the breadth and scope of the work required of prosecutors to contend with BWC footage is greater than first thought. Still, we agree this information provides a good baseline for this current VSP BWC conversation.

- 2018 Report to the General Assembly: Workgroup Study of the Impact of Body Worn Cameras on Workload in Commonwealth's Attorneys' Offices  
<https://www.scb.virginia.gov/docs/bodycameraworkgroupreport.pdf>
- 2019 Budget Amendment: Item 70 #2c  
<https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/amendment/2019/1/HB1700/Introduced/CR/70/2c/>

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This request is on top of our ongoing request for the state to fully fund all prosecutor and support staff positions identified as needed per the staffing standard approved by the Compensation Board resulting from a workload assessment project, which was ordered by the General Assembly. The project's final report issued at the end of 2023 is available as noted below, along with a presentation Robyn de Socio, Executive Secretary of the Compensation Board, provided to the General Government Subcommittee of the Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee (SFAC) on October 15, 2024.

- 2023 Report: Comprehensive Review and Time Study of Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Workload and Compensation Board Staffing Standard Revisions  
<https://www.scb.virginia.gov/docs/2023CAWorkloadreport.pdf>
- October 15, 2024 Presentation: Compensation Board to General Government Subcommittee of SFAC  
[https://virginia-senate.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=3&clip\\_id=6931](https://virginia-senate.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=6931)

In closing, please know our fiscal impact concern should not be construed as opposition to the use of BWCs. We respect that the use of BWCs is a policy matter for the state and localities. In addition, we acknowledge BWCs and their resulting videos can be helpful tools in the public safety and criminal justice fields. It is simply fair for us to request appropriate compensation when these tools are utilized.

If you require additional information about this matter, please contact me and Amanda Howie, VACA Administrator.

Very truly yours,



Anton A. Bell  
VACA President, 2023-2024  
Commonwealth's Attorney, City of Hampton

AAB/amh

cc: April Kees, Staff Director, Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee  
Anne E. Oman, Staff Director, House Appropriations Committee  
Robyn M. de Socio, Executive Secretary, Compensation Board