**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Sevier County Sheriff’s Office that officers assigned Body Worn Cameras **(BWC)** shall activate the camera when such use is appropriate to the proper performance of his or her official duties, where the recordings are consistent with this policy and law.

**PURPOSE:**

This policy intended to provide officers with instructions on when and how to use body warn cameras **(BWCs)** so that officers may reliably record their contact with inmates in the Sevier County Jail and Jail Annex.

DEFINITION:

**Body Worn Camera (BWC)** is an audio/visual recording device placed directly somewhere on the officer for the purpose of capturing and documenting events that officers may encounter.

**PROCEDURES:**

A. Administration

The Sevier County Sheriff’s Office has adopted the use of the BWC to accomplish several objectives primary objectives are as follows:

1. BWCs allow for accurate documentation of critical incidents. They also serve to enhance the accuracy of officer reports and testimony in court.

2. Audio and video recordings also enhance the Sevier County Sheriff’s Office ability to review, officer and inmate interaction and to provide additional information for officer evaluation and training.

3. The BWC may also be useful documenting evidence or contraband.

B. When and How to Use the BWC

1. Officers shall activate the BWC to record all contacts with inmates in the performance of official duties and have the BWC operational at all times during those contacts.

2. The BWC shall remain activated until the event is completed in order to ensure the integrity of the recording unless the contact moves into an area restricted by this policy.

3. If an officer fails to activate the BWC, fails to record the entire contact or interrupts the recording, the officer shall document why a recording was not made, was interrupted or was terminated.

C. Procedures for BWC Use

1. BWC equipment is issued primarily to uniformed personnel as authorized by the Sevier County Sheriff’s Office. Officers assigned BWC equipment must use the equipment unless otherwise authorized by supervisory personnel.

2. Jail personnel are to use only BWCs issued by the Sevier County Sheriff’s Office. The BWC equipment and all data, images, video and metadata captured, recorded or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the Sevier County Sheriff’s Office.

3. Jail personnel who are assigned BWCs must complete an agency approved and/or provided training program to insure proper use and operations. Additional training may be required at periodic intervals to ensure the continued effective use and operation of the equipment, proper calibration and performance and to incorporate changes, updates or other revisions in policy and equipment.

4. BWC equipment is the responsibility of individual officers and will be used with reasonable care to ensure proper functioning. Equipment malfunctions shall be brought to the attention of the officer’s immediate supervisor as soon as possible so that a replacement unit may be procured.

5. Officers shall inspect and test the BWC prior to each shift in order to verify proper functioning and shall notify their immediate supervisor of any problems.

6. Officers shall not edit, alter, or erase, duplicate, copy, share or otherwise distribute in any manner BWC recordings without prior written authorization and approval of the Sheriff or Chief Deputy of Jail Services or their designee.

7. Officers are encouraged to inform their immediate supervisors of any recordings that may be of value for training purposes.

8. If an Officer is suspected of wrongdoing or involved in serious use of force, the Sevier County Sheriff’s Office reserves the right to limit or restrict an officer from viewing the video file.

9. Officers shall note in incident reports when recordings were made during the incident in question. **However, BWC recordings are not a replacement for written reports**.

D. Restrictions on Use the BWC

**BWCs shall be used only in conjunction with official law enforcement duties. The BWC shall not generally be used to record:**

1. Communications with other personnel without the permission of the Sheriff, Chief Deputy of Jail Services or their designee.

2. Encounters with undercover officers or confidential informants.

3. When on a break or otherwise engaged in personal activities.

4. In any location where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as a restroom or locker room.

E. Storage

1. All file should be securely downloaded periodically and no later than the end of each shift or otherwise specified by the Sheriff, Chief Deputy of Jaill Services or their designee. Each file shall contain information related to the date, BWC identifier and assigned officer.

2. All images and sounds recorded by the BWC are the exclusive property of the Sevier County Sheriff’s Office. Accessing, copying or releasing files for non-law enforcement purposes is strictly prohibited.

3. All access to BWC data (images, sounds and mega data) must be specifically authorized by the Sheriff; Chief Deputy of Jail Services or their designee and all accesses is to be audited to ensure that only authorized users are accessing the data for legitimate and authorized purposes.

4. Files should be securely stored in accordance with State law and Sevier County Sheriff’s Office records retention policy and no longer than useful for purposes of training or for use in an investigation or prosecution. In capital punishment prosecutions, recording shall be kept until the offender is no longer under control of the criminal justice agency.

F. Supervisory Responsibilities

1. Supervisory personnel shall ensure that officers equipped with BWC devices utilize them in accordance with policy and procedures defined herein.

2. At least on a monthly basis, supervisors will randomly review BWC recordings to ensure that the equipment is operating properly and that officers are using the devices appropriately and in accordance with policy and to identify any areas in which additional training or guidance is required. Supervisors will report any abnormal findings to the Sheriff, Chief Deputy of Jail Services or their designee.

3. Supervisors and above are the only ones permitted to download/upload the cameras to the network.

G. Officer Responsibilities

1. Officers shall maintain their assigned unit in good working order.
2. Officers shall notify their immediate supervisor of any malfunction and/or recording problems.
3. Officers shall keep their assigned unit charged as necessary. (Units will have USB cable to charge at home. Charging stations will also be located in booking and in the hallway at Men’s Control at the Main Jail. In the Control stations at the Annex.)
4. Policies and Procedures stated above shall be followed at all times. Penalties for not following these procedures shall result in Disciplinary Sanctions up to and including discharge.