



DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

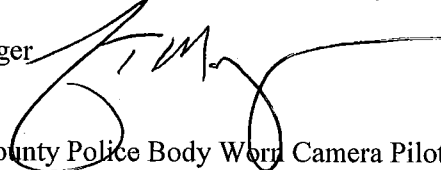
Isiah Leggett
County Executive

J. Thomas Manger
Chief of Police

MEMORANDUM

October 6, 2015

TO: Montgomery County Public Schools Community

FROM: J. Thomas Manger
Chief of Police 

SUBJECT: Montgomery County Police Body Worn Camera Pilot Program
in Montgomery County Public Schools

Several months ago, the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) implemented a Body Worn Camera System (BWCS) Pilot Program. I am pleased to provide you with information about these cameras and their use.

Body Worn Camera Technology is not a new phenomenon. It is a technology that has been tested and utilized for nearly a decade throughout the U.S. Over the past year there has been an increasing interest in the use of body cameras by police. The use of body-worn cameras has become the accepted "best practice" for the law enforcement community and the use of this tool by police is now expected by federal, state, and local governments, as well as the public.

A great deal of research has been done on the use of BWCs by police. Some of the findings include:

- Strengthening police/community relationships through increased accountability, transparency and trust.
- Providing better documentation of evidence, which is more objective, accurate and reliable.
- De-Escalating confrontations between officers and members of the public.
- Aiding in the training of officers to strengthen and improve officer performance and ultimately increase officer safety.

On July 1, 2015, the Maryland legislature enacted legislation to permit law enforcement agencies to develop and implement Body Worn Camera Pilot Programs so that police officers could begin wearing BWCs.

Office of the Chief of Police

Public Safety Headquarters • 100 Edison Park Drive • Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878
www.montgomerycountymd.gov • www.mymcpnews.com • MCPDChief@montgomerycountymd.gov

The MCPD has developed a Body Worn Camera Pilot Program. This program is guided by a policy that incorporates the best practices of departments around the country that are successfully utilizing this tool. Here are some important aspects of our policy:

- Maryland Law permits law enforcement officers to wear BWCs and utilize the cameras during their regular duties.
- The law provides that officers must give notice prior to recording unless it is unsafe, impractical, or impossible to do so.
- The BWCs will document events, actions, conditions, and statements made during law enforcement-related encounters and activities.
- Some School Resource Officers (SROs) may be wearing BWCs
- Some officers who respond to schools during calls for service will be wearing BWCs
- MCPD policy, pursuant to best police practices, dictates when a camera can be turned on, off, when recording is prohibited, and when it is discretionary.
- BWCs are not activated at all times
- BWCs are activated only for law enforcement-related encounters and activities
- BWCs are deactivated when an officer anticipates no further involvement in an event.
- Officers have discretion to turn off the BWCs when persons don't want to share information related to criminal activity, on camera, because of fear of retaliation, privacy concerns, or sensitivity.
- Officers must obtain consent prior to recording an interview with a victim of a sex offense.
- BWCs should not be used in locker rooms, dressing rooms, restrooms (unless part of a criminal investigation), strip searches, or surreptitious recordings.
- BWCS video is subject to the Maryland Public Information Act, thus footage will be released only if there is a legal requirement to release such footage.
- BWCs are not intended to be used during non-law enforcement activities, such as administrative conversations between the SRO and a teacher, principal, or other MCPS staff member.
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For further information, you may go to our Website and click on the link to see our entire BWC policy.

JTM:man