



HALIFAX

Update on Body Worn Video and Street Checks

Police Diversity Working Group
October 29, 2018

Body-worn video

Review of the evidence and implications for HRP –
presentation given to Board of Police Commissioners



Overview

- What problem are we trying to solve?
- Review of recent literature
- Cost and cost-effectiveness of BWV
- Implications for HRP



What problem are we trying to solve?

- The **primary categories** used in police services elsewhere to justify the implementation of BWV are:
 - Public confidence and transparency
 - Behavior modification (both officer and public)
 - Collection of Evidence
 - Non-criminal litigation
- These areas are all worthy of attention and continuous improvement:
 - However, we do not at present know if BWV represents *an effective strategy* and/or *the most appropriate strategy* to achieve improvements.
 - Recent literature may provide some guidance on what to expect from BWV.



Summary of recent literature on BWV (1)

- The predominant themes in existing literature relate to the impact of BWV on:
 - citizen complaints
 - officer use of force
 - officer injuries/assaults on officers
 - use of BWV content in court cases, and
 - public and police attitudes toward BWV
- Overall, the **results of research on the effectiveness of BWV have been mixed** with different studies suggesting BWV has positive, nil, or negative effects.



Summary of recent literature on BWV (2)

- Literature on BWV deployment shows **impacts on citizen complaints and officer use of force**, but only when officers have low discretion on when to turn cameras on/off.
- BWV can also **introduce unintended or negative consequences** such as increased violence against police, decreased professional discretion, and increased officer use of force.



Summary of recent literature on BWV (3)

- Members of the public in English-speaking jurisdictions are **largely supportive of BWV**, however **support is lower among people with more negative attitudes toward police.**
- The measured positive effects of BWV **may decrease or disappear over time**
- There are **many unanswered questions about the policy and legal basis**, related to:
 - Privacy for citizens (and to a lesser extent for police employees)
 - Workload for police officers and records clerks
 - Workload for PPS, defense attorneys, courts



Summary of recent literature on BWV (4)

HIGH-END MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 90% reduction in complaints (Ariel et al 2015), possibly as high as 96% with 'full compliance'/low discretion (Hedberg et al 2016)
- No effect on officer injuries (White, Gaub and Todak 2017)
- 50% reduction in use of force during arrests (Henstock and Ariel 2016; White, Gaub and Todak 2017)
- 65% reduction in injuries to persons arrested
- 28% of content potentially usable in justice system processes/court cases (Grossmith et al 2015)
- 3x increase in convictions in intimate partner violence (IPV) cases (Morrow et al 2016)

LOW-END MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 10% (statistically non-significant) reduction in complaints (Ariel et al 2016b; see also Grossmith et al 2015)
- 71% increase in use of force (Ariel et al 2016a, see also Henstock and Ariel 2016)
- 15% increase in assaults against officers (Ariel et al 2016c)
- 3x increase (statistically non-significant) in injuries to officers during arrest (Henstock and Ariel 2016)
- 6-10% of content potentially usable in justice system processes/court cases (professional correspondence)
- Mixed results in IPV cases and increased processing times (Morrow et al 2016)




Cost and cost-effectiveness of BWV (1)

- Any claim of cost-effectiveness first presumes effectiveness – which is an open question at present (i.e. not evidence-based)
 - And ‘effectiveness’ needs to be defined – again, what problem would BWV potentially solve?
 - For example, BWV may increase trust and confidence in populations with already high opinion of police, but reduce it in populations where trust issues exist.
 - BWV may increase *or* decrease incidents of use of force, depending on implementation



Cost and cost-effectiveness of BWV (1)

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An important study: [#BWV](#) increases public satisfaction with police contact, but [#ProceduralJustice](#) increases it more urban.org/sites/default/...

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force, depending on implementation



Cost and cost-effectiveness of BWV (2)

- Direct costs of BWV have reduced somewhat
 - If we are comfortable with the cloud storage option, fixed costs related to data storage and security are lower now than in 2016
 - And camera usage can be scaled up/down more readily.



Cost and cost-effectiveness of BWV (3)

- Nonetheless, indirect costs – especially the labour required to process video data – will likely remain high regardless of direct costs, for police as well as courts
 - A large amount of video will need to be vetted and curated for potential use in investigations and trials
 - And there will be additional costs and considerations related to availability of video through for example FOIPOP
 - There are unanswered questions about data custody in the long term (e.g. if there was a change in BWV service provider)



Cost comparison, Cloud versus in-house storage

Areas	In-house storage	Cloud storage
Direct costs (cameras, chargers and other equipment; data storage costs)	\$2.19 million	\$1.93 million
Indirect costs (labour, training, tagging and processing evidence, etc.)	\$5.33 million	\$5.33 million
Total 5-year cost	\$7.52 million	\$7.26 million

All figures assuming 50 cameras purchased and operational at HRP each year, with 400 user licenses in the Cloud storage option



Implications (1)

- Any decision rests on an answer to the question about what problem BWV may solve
 - Data on effectiveness of BWV remains equivocal and is context-specific
- If BWV proved to have a positive impact, it still may not be justified given the direct and indirect costs
 - For example, what else could we do with a similar amount of funding and labour?



Implications (2)

- Scalability of costs in the Cloud option makes a small pilot of the technology potentially more palatable, but should not be a priority for HRP
 - Even a pilot would require substantial policy and training development in advance.
 - E.g. Privacy impact assessment, video evidence management strategy for investigations and court, camera use and metadata protocols, community consultation.
 - Potential negative impacts ('pre-mortem') would need to be considered and any impacts properly measured (through ongoing evaluation)