

Placerville Police News Release



For Immediate Release

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Body Worn Camera Testing Expanded At Placerville Police Department

NEWS RELEASE

Placerville Police Department
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Placerville, CA – Placerville Police Department pleased with body worn cameras; expands program.

As part of the Placerville Police Department's Strategic Plan, body worn cameras have been in a testing and evaluation phase on two officers since March of this year. The City Council was recently provided an update on the testing and evaluation of the project by Commander Kay Iida. He reported there have been some lessons learned and adjustments during the testing and evaluation phase. These include the positioning of the camera on the officer's collars to best capture the line of sight perspective during contacts. Additionally, officers have been provided handheld portable tablet devices to allow officers to view and index secured video in the field eliminating the need to go to a computer terminal at the station several times a shift. Overall, the project has had many benefits and has been well received by officers and community members alike.

In a Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) survey of Chiefs of Police from 254 agencies nationwide, the number one reason for implementing an officer-worn camera system was to provide accurate documentation of encounters. Body worn cameras increase transparency and accountability which is a priority of the Department of Justice COPS Office and law enforcement agencies throughout the nation today. Some of the many benefits of body worn cameras are: improved digital evidence gathering; reduced time in court; increased successful prosecutions; streamlined reporting; and use as a training tool. Additionally, cameras improve quality of service by more efficient clearance of public complaints, reduced liability claims, and by protecting officers from false accusations.

During the testing and evaluation phase, the Placerville Police Department has experienced mostly successes. There have been over 150 hours of captured digital evidence since the process began. Officers have successfully recorded confessions to criminal acts, DUI driver contacts, suspect

apprehensions and false allegations by suspects during arrest situations. Early data from the first half of this year indicates a reduction in citizen complaints and time spent investigating those complaints.

The two initial body worn cameras were purchased from TASER International from grant funding. The current camera configuration attaches to the officer's collar and captures both audio and video of what the officer is actually observing and in the same light conditions. The video is saved in a cloud-based video evidence storage service. The storage system is used by 3,700 police departments across the U.S. and is protected by regular vulnerability testing.

The police department took public input on the body worn camera project at its public Strategic Plan Meeting in March of 2015 and continues to invite public input. After consultation with the Placerville Police Officers Association, the US Department of Justice, Police Executive Research Forum, International Association of Chiefs of Police, California Police Chief's Association and various other law enforcement agencies throughout the state. The department has established a comprehensive policy aiming to strike a balance between the need to capture video evidence and privacy concerns.

In June of 2015, Placerville Police submitted a grant to DOJ seeking additional funding for more body worn cameras. Upon receipt of the grant, the police department will seek to purchase cameras for every patrol officer. In the meantime, the department plans to expand the testing and evaluation with a couple more cameras on patrol. "We are pleased with the current testing and evaluation of body worn cameras on our patrol officers," said Chief Scott Heller. "Again, it puts everyone, officers and citizens alike, on their best behaviors."

