Guidelines to help formulate model policy for an evolving technology

Body-Worn Cameras
Evolving Use of Body Worn Cameras

- Officer-involved shooting in Three Rivers – Officers discuss the benefits of body cameras in the wake of a fatal shooting.

- Ft. Worth deploys 200 body cameras, plans to deploy 500 cameras over the next 3 years.

- NYPD ordered to implement body-worn cameras – Many believe that cameras provide more accurate documentation of encounters, which can benefit officers.
Survey Purpose: To measure police department usage of body-worn cameras across the country and identify the major issues associated with such use.

Survey Pool: 500 agencies received survey invite

Survey Respondents: 254 agencies responded (50 % response rate)
Survey Results

- Of the 254 responding agencies, **75 percent** do not currently use body-worn cameras.
- Of the 254 responding agencies, only **63 agencies (25 percent)** currently use body-worn cameras.
- Nearly **one-third** of agencies that use body-worn cameras **do not possess written policies**.
According to survey results, the **#1 reason** why departments obtain body worn cameras for agency personnel:

“To provide accurate documentation of encounters.”
PERF Survey Results, Policy Reviews & Interviews

Perceived Benefits of BWCs
Accountability & Transparency

- Exonerates officers who are targets of citizen complaints and reduces the number of lawsuits against the department
Assists chiefs with identifying and correcting systemic problems or individual officer issues
Serves as a teaching tool to train officers on proper strategies and techniques
Captures valuable evidence for investigations and trials

- More accurate documentation of scenes, interviews, and encounters.
Rialto, CA Police Department Study

- 12 month controlled experiment
- Research questions:
  - Will wearing body worn cameras reduce the number of complaints again officers compared to the control group?
  - Will wearing the BWCs reduce the number (instances) of use-of-force compared to the control group?
Additional Considerations

- Unions & Officer Buy-In
  - Alleviating “Big Brother” concerns
  - Greensboro, NC Video Clip
Impact on Community: Accountability vs. Right of Privacy

- Should citizens have an expectation of privacy?
- Should officers have expectation of privacy in certain circumstances?
Accountability vs. Right of Privacy: Consent to Record

- **Single-party consent**: only one party must consent to oral communication
- **Two-party consent**: all parties must consent
### Two-party consent states

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<tr>
<th>California</th>
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*Source: NIJ, A Primer on Body-Worn Cameras for Law Enforcement (September 2012)*
Engaging the Community

- Can cameras improve relationship with community?
- Potential to harm?
- Public awareness of body cameras
Community Impact

- Impact on Procedural Justice
Financial costs and constraints

- Cost of equipment
- Data storage costs
- Is it worth it?