



INFORMATION RELEASE

August 2, 2022

In November of 2016 the Berkeley Heights Police Department began full deployment of body-worn cameras (BWCs). At that time, the department purchased *Axon Body 2* cameras from Axon/Taser International Inc. We recently upgraded our cameras, which had been utilized to the extent of the manufacturer's recommendations, to the ***Axon Body 3*** (shown below).



The Department's standard operating procedures – including when an officer turns a camera on or off – comply with standards set by the New Jersey Attorney General's Office. These standards apply to all New Jersey police agencies that use BWCs.

Why Body Cameras?

- To improve public safety
- To enhance transparency, accountability and trust
- To reduce complaints against officers
- To make prosecutions more efficient and effective

Who wears body cameras?

Uniformed police officers wear body-worn cameras, as well as non-uniformed officers in certain situations as determined by the Chief of Police.

What does body-camera footage show?

BWC footage is similar to footage from a cell phone camera. BWCs are mounted to an officer's uniform, body armor, or other outermost garment (usually the chest or shoulder area). The cameras point away from the officer and capture images in the camera's field of vision. Citizens who interact with police officers will be recorded on body camera footage – both video and audio.

Are there limitations of BWC Footage?

Body-worn camera footage is a useful tool in providing clarity about police interactions. However, camera footage cannot provide all of the information that is needed to make a fair and accurate judgment about police activity. Footage is only one part of a thorough investigation; it does not replace a thorough investigation.

Limitations of BWC footage include:

- The camera does not reveal what the officer perceived or what was in his/her mind.
- The camera does not follow the officer's eyes, see exactly what he/she sees, or record physiological and psychological stress that may affect the officer's perception.
- The camera cannot record sensory cues (such as physical resistance or tension), it can only record visual cues.
- In low light, the camera lens may see more clearly than a human being can see.
- Cameras only record two-dimensionally. This means that viewers may not be able to accurately judge distances from footage.

