

Body Camera Usage in Parking Services

ISSUE

This report summarizes the usage of body-worn cameras (BWC) in the Parking Services section and provides an overview of key items and the policy framework surrounding their use.

BACKGROUND

The Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services, at its [meeting on May 9, 2022](#), resolved:

“That the administration report back on the implementation and early evaluation of the body worn camera program in the Parking Services operations, including privacy considerations and program costs.”

This report addresses the resolution on the usage of BWC in the Parking Services section (Parking Services) and provides an overview of the program since its deployment in March 2021.

CURRENT STATUS

Parking Services is comprised of Parking Enforcement, Parking Operations, Vehicle Impoundment and Document Delivery. Typical duties involved in these positions include the issuance of parking tickets, booting and seizing of vehicles and deliverance of legal documents to initiate legal proceedings. These duties often lead to emotionally charged situations with the public. In response to a number of safety incidents, Parking Services began developing a BWC program in 2019. As of March 2021, a total of 23 BWCs were issued to front line staff of the four public facing teams for general duty use.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

In 2019, a business case was developed to implement the use of BWCs aimed at improving occupational safety of City and contract staff during the delivery of Parking Services duties. This also included the completion of a Privacy Impact Assessment which addressed items such as data storage, access restrictions and safeguards to ensure proper usage of the data.

The objective of the BWC program is to improve safety for City and contract staff during the delivery of duties for parking enforcement, vehicle seizure, parking operations and document delivery. The primary goal is to deter verbal abuse and physical assault towards staff members as they are often alone and may experience improper interactions while working with customers.

Body-worn cameras were approved and distributed for field staff in March 2021 and remain in service as designated personal protective equipment. The 23 camera units were purchased, with existing operating funding, from a local vendor for a total cost of approximately \$2,700.

Media Storage and Operating Procedures

Audio and video are recorded during interactions, which occur while providing parking and enforcement related services. Cameras are only recording when the operator activates recording. Recordings may be activated during an interaction with a customer or member of the public, which may include providing a Notice of Violation (parking ticket), seizing a vehicle, serving customers paying for and retrieving a seized vehicle at Impound, serving summons and subpoenas or when servicing or collecting coin from parking pay stations. At the beginning of an interaction, staff will communicate, "For safety and quality assurance reasons, you are being video and audio recorded. If you have questions, you can call the City Clerk's Office".

Municipal Scan

In our municipal scan (see Appendix 1), many cities across Canada have considered, or are in the process of, implementing a BWC program for their bylaw enforcement personnel. Saskatoon is the only Canadian city identified within the municipal scan with an active BWC program for their bylaw enforcement personnel.

Early Results/Incident Analysis

From 2017 to August 2022, a total of 88 incidents were reported, with 21 incidents requiring police intervention. Of the 88 incidents, 23 were categorized as assaults. An assault on an officer is defined as causing physical harm or engaging in other conduct that threatens or endangers the imminent health or safety of the officer. Of notable mention, in 2019, two Parking Enforcement Officers sustained injuries during confrontations and required hospitalization. From January to August 2022, there have been a total of 17 incidents, with five assaults reported, three of which required police response.

A year-to-year incident reporting summary is noted (see Appendix 2). Since the deployment of BWCs in March 2021, there has been no marked decline in incidents or officer assaults. While Administration has not observed any marked change in statistics, further reporting will be presented during the 2023 Annual Community Standards Report as more data becomes available for further trend analysis. Given that BWC usage has only been in place since March 2021, it is anticipated that a lengthier data sampling period will start to identify reductions in negative encounters through the use of BWCs.

In a recent survey to both City and parking enforcement contract staff, the majority of BWC operators felt that BWCs improved their safety. Enforcement officers have indicated a greater comfort level with BWCs in place and support their continued use. While negative encounters still occur, individuals appear to be less inclined to engage in any physical violence or threats of violence knowing BWCs are present, according to the survey.

It is important to recognize that the Parking Services BWC program has a much smaller scope and use when compared to police BWC programs. The police BWC programs require significant review, evidence management protocols and have more privacy

concerns when entering into private dwellings or other sensitive areas while activating the BWC, as part of the standard operating procedure for responding to a call or any other engagement.

For Parking Services, interactions with the public are predominately, if not entirely, in the public domain where there is a far lower expectation of privacy. Body-worn camera media is only relied upon as evidence to support parking offence matters in bylaw court, if there is any relevant evidence captured in relation to the offence and if media exists, which is highly unlikely as the BWC is only activated when there is an encounter and used to simply record this encounter. Any criminal matter recorded during an encounter may be disclosed to police for further investigation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Beyond the additional purchase of cameras, there are no additional or ongoing costs to the Parking Services BWC program. The program does not require extensive staff time or resources to manage given its size and volume of media being captured and the intended media usage.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The collection of BWC media is retained and protected under *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The City of Saskatoon's Video Management Policy, currently in development and formerly known as the Video Surveillance Policy and Procedures, and Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedures also apply to their use. Media captured will not be edited and will be stored and retained in accordance with the City's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedures, as well as the City's Retention Schedule. As per the City's Digital Information Technology Security Policy, recordings will be retained for 30 days by default. If recordings are not accessed for post investigative or training purposes, they will then be deleted. Any records accessed for investigative/complaint/altercation purposes will be retained for two years and then are automatically deleted. To date, there has not been any Freedom of Information requests for any BWC media.

NEXT STEPS

Administration will provide further reporting on BWC statistics as part of the 2022 Community Standards Year-End Report anticipated in Quarter 1 of 2023.

APPENDICES

1. Municipal Scan – Body Worn Cameras in other Municipalities
2. Parking Services Incident Report Summary up to August 2022

REPORT APPROVAL

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