



LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

7.3.1p19 Chapter 19: Patrol Vehicle Video and Body-Worn Cameras

Revised:

Last Reviewed: May 27, 2025

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I. PURPOSE

- A. Establishes a standard operating procedure for using patrol vehicle video equipment and body-worn cameras or recording devices for those agencies using them.
- B. Establishes a standard operating procedure for using personally owned electronic devices.

II. RULES AND REGULATIONS

The purpose of patrol cars and body-worn cameras is to improve evidentiary outcomes, enhance safety, and improve interactions between officers and the public. **(GLECP 1.22a)** This policy applies to TCSG agency issued devices, devices supplied by an officers primary agency, as well as personal devices.

A. Patrol Vehicle Video Equipment/Body Worn Cameras **(GLECP 1.22)**

1. Policy

All video cameras installed in departmental vehicles will activate when the emergency lights are activated and remain operational until emergency light use is discontinued or until the system is manually overridden. Video cameras will be activated during any traffic stop. The camera will be positioned, whenever possible, to capture the violator's vehicle so that the license plate and the passenger compartment are recorded. This procedure is also required

on any other events, incidents, transports, or calls for service requiring a police response. The recording equipment will be activated prior to making contact with the citizen, and the recording systems will not be deactivated until the call for service has been completed. **(GLECP 1.22b)** This policy does not require the officers to inform individuals whom they have encountered that their camera(s) is activated and recording audio/ video.

All officers will have body-worn cameras assigned to them while on duty. Additionally, all enforcement personnel must utilize body-worn cameras when working designated unique details, extra-duty jobs, and participating in events that may lead to enforcement actions.

This policy does not govern the use of surreptitious recording devices in undercover operations.

2. Procedure

Officers are to inspect their in-car and body-worn camera systems at the start of each shift. This includes checking for all associated peripheral devices (e.g. – audio transmitters) and checking to see that equipment designed to activate automatically is operational. The officer is to report any problems with equipment to their supervisor as soon as possible. Officers may correct obvious problems with equipment (e.g. – disconnected wires) but should not change any settings or perform any other action which would be more appropriate for an authorized service technician to complete. Equipment repair or maintenance is to be performed by authorized service personnel only. Officers are to engage in-car and body-worn cameras on all self-initiated activity, calls for service, and other official contacts (e.g. – interviews, complaints, etc.).

- a. Digital In-Car Camera Procedures (GLECP 1.22e) All vehicles equipped with a digital in-car camera system will include a digital video camera, digital video recorder, and audio body microphone (body pack) capable of recording audio footage and activating the video system remotely. The system will not allow previously registered audio/video to be overwritten or erased.
 - i. When beginning a tour of duty, each patrol officer assigned to a vehicle with a digital in-car camera system will inspect and prepare the camera system for use by logging onto the system and ensuring the date and time are correct on the recording system. The officer will notify the shift supervisor if the recording equipment is not functioning correctly.
 - ii. Cameras and associated peripheral devices (e.g. – audio transmitters) are to remain activated until the law enforcement incident is concluded. The equipment may be manually deactivated during non-enforcement activities such as protecting traffic crash scenes from other traffic or protecting a crime scene perimeter. Recordings are to be re-activated when the officer reengages in a law enforcement incident, such as confronting someone at the crime scene perimeter.

b. Use of Audio Body Pack

All officers will ensure that their body packs are synchronized with their camera systems at the beginning of their tour of duty. All officers will ensure the audio is activated when the camera is recording. Sometimes it may be appropriate to ensure the audio is recording, even though the camera cannot record evidentiary video. The recording light on the camera lens will be illuminated when the audio is activated. Officers are reminded to turn the AM/FM radio down or off during such recording to enhance the quality of the in-car audio recording.

- i. The audio body pack will be worn on the uniform to not muffle or interfere with the audio recording.
- ii. The audio body pack will be fully charged before the officer's tour of duty.
- iii. The audio body pack shall be synchronized to the vehicle's digital video camera system as part of the officer's daily initial preparation of the camera system for use. The officer must also synchronize the audio body pack to the recording system anytime the connection is lost.

c. Body Worn Camera Procedures

All officers assigned a BWC must wear the camera while working extra-duty jobs. The camera systems must be fully charged at the beginning of the officer's tour of duty. The operator must also ensure the date and time stamp are properly calibrated. Only departmental-issued cameras are approved for use by departmental personnel. BWCs may only be used officially; all other use is prohibited.

Video data recorded on the body-worn cameras must be classified by the officer assigned to the camera. The case number of the event will classify each file, or if no case number is assigned, the video will be classified by the six-digit date and the officer's last name. If more than one video is generated by the same officer on the same date, not assigned a case number, the date will be followed by a letter beginning with a, then b, and so on (example: 070212a Smith, 070212b Smith, etc.).

- i. Video data recorded and classified by the assigned officer will be transferred and stored as specified by the College Chief of Police. After all the data is transferred to the computer system, it will be erased from the body-worn cameras. If an officer discovers a citizen failed to record, the failure will be documented in the associated report (incident report, accident report, etc.). Video data should be transferred daily. Each officer must download all data before the end of each work rotation.
- ii. Officers will not attempt to change or delete video data recorded on any portable video camera system that has not been adequately transferred and stored.
- iii. No personnel may delete any photograph or recording transferred to secure storage outside of the retention schedules listed in this policy without permission of the Chief of Police.

- iv. Stored video recordings needed for court or other purposes, as approved by the Chief of Police, may be released by the Chief of Police or their designee. Officers will follow standard courtroom evidence procedures regarding the recordings. If the recording is not retained as evidence by court personnel, it shall be placed in the original case file and returned to the Support Division.
 - (a) All procedures outlined in this policy also apply to the use of the recording devices by civilian employees of all TCSG Law Enforcement Agencies.
 - v. All enforcement personnel will receive training on using and properly wearing the body-worn cameras during either the FTO training program or the new hire training phase. In addition, all newly promoted supervisors tasked with downloading recordings will receive training on the administrative use of the recordings.
- d. Review of Captured Data

Criminal Use of Captured Data

The BWC and ICC equipment and all data, images, video and meta data captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the agency and are maintained by the agency on a secure computer. Members of the agency may not copy, publish, share, or disseminate any audio, video, image, or data to anyone except as authorized by the agency. Furthermore, members of the agency may not edit, delete, or alter any video or audio captured by the BWC or ICC stored on the agency's computer without the written authorization and approval of the Chief or their designee. The requirement for written authorization does not apply in the case of a request for recordings originating from Prosecutor's Office employees or other law enforcement agencies as part of a court proceeding or an official investigation. Although Use of Force reviews of captured data are administrative in nature, it is recognized that a use of force which results in the serious injury or death of a suspect may have an element of the investigation which could be handled by outside criminal justice agencies (i.e. Georgia Bureau of Investigation, District Attorney's Office, Coroner's Inquest), and this could be construed as a criminal investigation.

- i. An officer may review recordings as part of any casework or use of force investigation, to assist them with the completion of an accurate report or otherwise in the performance of their duties.
- ii. If a critical incident or use of force investigation involves serious injury or death of a suspect, the recording will first be viewed with the Chief or their designee.
- iii. Officers are restricted from viewing recordings if criminal wrongdoing is overt and obvious.
- iv. If an officer is suspected of wrongdoing which may result in criminal prosecution, the agency reserves the right to limit or restrict an officer from viewing a video file. Requests for deletion of portions of the recordings (i.e., in the event of a personal recording) must be

submitted in writing and approved by the Chief or their designee in accordance with state record retention laws. All requests and final decisions shall be kept on file.

TCSG agencies who allow their part-time officers to use BWCs and/or ICCs supplied by their primary agency, will need to establish and maintain MOAs with the primary agency to ensure that captured data can be reviewed and documented by the TCSG agency. (See section II. B. 5 below.)

Administrative Use of Captured Data

Each month, recordings captured by in-car/body-worn cameras are to be reviewed and documented. Supervisors shall review the following recordings: recordings of any officer injury; recordings of any citizen injury; recordings of any use of force incident; recordings of any vehicle pursuit and actions taken following the pursuit; recordings of any incident resulting in a citizen complaint. These reviews are to be used to help address any necessary changes to training, handling officer complaints, and possible policy development.

- i. Supervisors are responsible for reviewing at least one (1) random recording from each subordinate who has utilized in-car and/or body-worn cameras.
- ii. Any policy, procedure, or other issue discovered during the review is to be addressed by supervision and/or elevated in accordance with policy.

TCSG agencies who allow their part-time officers to use BWCs and/or ICCs supplied by their primary agency, will need to establish and maintain MOAs with the primary agency to ensure that captured data can be reviewed and documented by the TCSG agency. (See section II. B. 5 below.)

e. **Classification and Retention Schedule (GLECP 1.22d)**

All data will be retained per the State of Georgia Retention Schedule, which can be found online at:

www.georgiaarchives.org/records/state_government

f. TCSG agencies who allow their part-time officers to use BWCs and/or ICCs supplied by their primary agency, will need to establish and maintain MOAs with the primary agency to ensure that captured data is stored and retained in a manner at least as stringent as this policy (See section II. B. 5 below)

HB 976 – 2016 Legislative session modifies the retention schedule for law enforcement surveillance cameras, body-worn cameras, and in-car cameras. The bill mandates retention for 180 days except when such recordings capture; an arrest, use of force by an officer, or vehicular accident, which must be stored for 30 months. The recording must be kept through final adjudication if there are other investigations or pending litigation. Local governments nor law enforcement agencies will have the duty to redact or obscure people or objects in the recording and shall not bare any civil liability for such depictions.

- i. Officers will be required to choose a classification that most closely corresponds with each recorded incident when the

recording is stopped. The classifying officer shall also document the unique agency-issued case number, where applicable, within the designated data field and the code response in the Notes field if the response was an emergency response. All officers on the scene of an event will code their videos the same, even if the officer is not the primary officer. These classifications determine the retention schedule for the video. The videos will be classified as follows:

- ii. **PHYSICAL ARREST**- Any recorded action by primary or backup officers that result in an arrest. All officers on the scene will code their videos as "PHYSICAL ARREST." Additionally, all use of force incidents will be recorded under "PHYSICAL ARREST."
- iii. **PURSUIT** - Any recorded action by primary or backup officers involved in a pursuit or engaged in a support role during a pursuit.
- iv. **MISC/ACCIDENTAL** -Any recorded action by primary or backup officers resulting from a dispatched call, self-initiated call, or security check that does not result in an arrest or is not part of a criminal investigation.
- v. **INCIDENT REPORT** - Any recorded action by an officer that involves a criminal investigation.
- vi. **FIELD INTERVIEW** - Any recorded action by an officer that may not be needed for immediate review but has a high probability of containing incriminating evidence. For example, Field Interviews of suspicious person(s) and recorded interviews that may result in or support criminal charges.
- vii. **TRAFFIC** - Any recorded action by primary or backup officers where a traffic citation is issued. If a citation is issued during an arrest, the officer will use the event code that is most appropriate, e.g., "PHYSICAL ARREST" or "PURSUIT."
- viii. **MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT** - Any recorded action by primary or backup officers during a motor vehicle accident investigation.
- ix. **ARCHIVED VIDEOS** - Videos designated for this classification may include preliminary and follow-up investigations associated with any homicide, Use of Force with severe injury or death, Vehicle Pursuit with serious injury or death, or other recorded incidents as determined by the department's administration. No officer shall classify a video with this designation. Instead, the officer shall utilize a classification described above. The Chief of Police or designee assumes responsibility for using the "Archived Videos" classification.
- x. Officers requiring video to be retained longer than the abovementioned retention times will submit a video archive request in writing to the Chief of Police or designee, noting the reason for the increased retention time. Video with this classification will be removed once authorized by the Chief of Police.

B. Agency Owned and Personally Owned Electronic Devices (GLECP 1.21 and 1.22)

Electronic devices are defined as any equipment (such as cell/smart phones, workstation computers, mobile data terminals, cameras etc.)

which can photograph, record, transmit, or receive information which can be sent via the internet, verbally, by text message, or by electronic mail. Any employee who is deemed to violate any of the agency rules or regulations regarding use of electronic devices, whether agency or personal devices, or any part of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1. Agency Electronic Devices

TCSG may make available to employees appropriate access to computers and other technologies to enhance the employees ability to complete their various assignments and duties efficiently and effectively. These technological tools remain the property of the department.

Agency personnel are prohibited from installing any hardware or software, or from altering the original configuration of these devices. Agency personnel are also restricted from interfacing with outside software or hardware with the agency- owned equipment without first obtaining authorization from the Chief of Police or their designee.

2. Agency Computers

No outside computer software or other files will be installed or used on agency computers without prior approval by the Chief of Police or his designee. In addition, any software introduced into the computer system must be inspected for potential virus infection and system compliance assurance by the IT system administrator.

Personnel will NOT access or log on to a computer or program using any other person's Username or Password nor may they send email messages using someone else's Username or Password.

Personnel will NOT forward email messages from other employees to individuals not employed by the agency or to other employees of the TCSG who do not have a legitimate business need for the email being forwarded without first obtaining the express permission of the original sender or author of the message.

Personnel will NOT send email messages that contain inappropriate language or material.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

GEORGIA LAW ENFORCEMENT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (GLECP) STANDARDS

INCLUDED: 1.21, 1.22 (a, b, c, d, e, and f)

This policy is for the Law Enforcement Agencies of the Technical College System of Georgia use only and does not apply to any criminal or civil proceeding. The policy shall not be construed as creating a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense concerning third-party claims. Violations of this policy will form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions only. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.