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
Exonerates officers who are targets of citizen complaints and reduces the number of lawsuits against the department.
Accountability & Transparency

- Assists chiefs with identifying and correcting systemic problems or individual officer issues
Accountability & Transparency

- Serves as a teaching tool to train officers on proper strategies and techniques
Efficiency

- 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?
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
Additional Considerations

- Financial costs and constraints
  - Cost of equipment
  - Data storage costs
  - Is it worth it?