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31902 - JOU FIREARMS BODY WORN VIDEO

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1. About this policy and procedure

- 1.1. All overt armed policing units across the country should implement the use of BWV by officers deployed on armed operations. The use of BWV by Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) enhances the accountability, transparency and evidential value at armed incidents.
- 1.2. This document sets out the Operational Procedures for the use of Body Worn Video (BWV) by armed officers and dog support officers when deployed to a firearms operation and is to be read in conjunction with the Hampshire and Thames Valley Joint Operational Guidance.
- 1.3. Particular attention is drawn to the specific instructions for armed and dog support officers in respect of when to start recording and the Post Incident Procedure.
- 1.4. The policy is intended to provide officers, deployed on overt firearms operation the framework within which to deploy BWV.
- 1.5. The policy is intended to enable effective use of BWV to capture best evidence when officers are deployed at firearms incidents.

2. General principles

- 2.1. BWV is a useful means for recording evidence and for demonstrating transparency in respect of police actions at incidents. However, BWV should only be used to corroborate and not replace more traditional forms of evidence.
- 2.2. BWV is an overt system and is not to be used for covert recording except in exceptional circumstances and where the necessary authorities have been granted.
- 2.3. AFOs and Firearms Support Dog (FSD) Handlers in the Joint Operations Unit (JOU) spend the vast majority of their time on duty engaged in Local Policing work that does not involve them deployed in an armed capacity. The use of BWV by AFOs and FSD Handlers should be governed by exactly the same procedures and instructions contained within the wider Hampshire and Thames Valley Joint BWV Policy.

2.4. Guidance, Procedures & Tactics

2.4.1. Operational use of BWV

- 2.4.1.1. All AFOs are provided with personal issue BWV cameras and **MUST** deploy with their BWV when on duty. There is a stock of spare cameras at each ARV base and if an officer's camera fails during a tour of duty, they will replace it with one of the spares at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.4.1.2. Armed officers, particularly when they are involved in incidents that may result in a post incident procedure are and will continue to be subject to intense scrutiny. In order to provide reassurance to the public around the integrity and transparency of our processes Armed officers will adhere to the following procedures. Dog Support officers supporting AFOs in armed policing deployments will similarly adhere to these procedures.
- 2.4.1.3. On a spontaneous firearms deployment the briefing given to AFOs is via a recorded talk group therefore there is no requirement to turn the camera on at this stage but at the point the officers 'arm up' they will be regarded as deployed and the BWV **MUST** be turned on. In the circumstances where officers 'self-deploy' the officers **MUST** commence recording as soon as practicable. Any delay in starting the recording process must be recorded in subsequent notes of evidence and is to include the reason for that delay.
- 2.4.1.4. BWV can be used as a means of recording briefings for spontaneous firearms operations. This supports the guidance in APP Armed Policing – Briefing which states the most comprehensive method of providing an accurate record of the briefing should be used. NOTE – briefings may contain information that is sensitive and this should be taken into consideration during the BWV data retrieval where the footage should be protectively marked.
- 2.4.1.5. For most of the time the BWV camera can be mounted at chest level on the officers Dual Purpose or Tactical vest. However, during a firearms deployment the recommendation from the College of Policing is that AFOs should wear the BWV camera as a head mount as the video footage, if chest level, is likely to be blocked by the officer bringing firearms to bear. For this reason, AFOs are issued with the Axon 4 camera which includes a bullet camera attachment which can be mounted in alternative locations such as ballistic helmets.
- 2.4.1.6. Should the camera fail during a tour of duty the AFO will replace the camera from the existing buffer stock that is held at each of the ARV base stations. This will be subject to urgent operational demand but the expectation is that AFOs will deploy with a charged and usable BWV camera on all overt firearms operations. The requirement to replace broken cameras during a live firearms operation will be the responsibility of the OFC and

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TFC to manage and arrangements should be made to replace the broken camera when operationally safe to do so.

- 2.4.1.7. Counter Terrorism Specialist Firearms Officers (CTSFO) will comply with their Force Policy and operational guidance. When deployed covertly they will continue to use BWV but these will only be activated at the point of interception or intervention, and at the discretion of the Operational Firearms Commander (OFC), as per National Guidance.

2.4.2. During Recording

- 2.4.2.1. Users must be mindful that BWV is an overt recording mechanism. If used in a covert manner without necessary authorities, then there is a risk of evidence being ruled inadmissible and being excluded at court. Hants/TVP policy is that covert recording using BWV is not permitted.
- 2.4.2.2. The general requirement is for armed officers and dog support officers deployed on an armed police operation to activate the BWV as described above. Officers should make a verbal announcement to all present at the scene, in plain language, that an incident is being both audio and video recorded unless it is impracticable to do so by reason of the situation, behaviour or condition of those present, or because of the dynamics of an armed interception or intervention. This includes as soon as practicable during/after an armed challenge.
- 2.4.2.3. In the event of a protracted firearms operation, the use of BWV should be controlled to coincide with the anticipation of an armed interception/deployment. This will preserve the battery life of the BWV; avoid unnecessary capture of private data and collateral intrusion. Consideration should be given to extending the command instructions given to officers to remind them when to turn on their BWV cameras and to spare cameras being brought to scene as replacement if necessary.
- 2.4.2.4. The rationale to stop recording should be explained prior to any de-activation. This action will help corroborate the control of the incident and justify the activation or deactivation of the BWV.
- 2.4.2.5. Recording should, where practicable, be restricted to those individuals and areas where it is necessary in order to provide evidence or intelligence relevant to the incident. It is important that, where practicable, users minimise collateral intrusion on those not involved in the incident.
- 2.4.2.6. In cases where formal Post Incident Procedures (PIP) are taking place or are likely to take place, users should continue to record until otherwise instructed by the nominated Post Incident Manager (PIM). For further details refer to Section 5 – Post Incident.
- 2.4.2.7. There may be occasions where a person objects to being recorded. Users may record overt video and audio without consent if this recording is for 'a policing purpose' and

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they are lawfully on any premises. Authority to do so should not be confused with a power to take photographs without consent. Unless the incident results in a PIP, the decision to continue recording should remain with the user, who should consider the objections made by the person in respect of the recording. The presumption should be, however, that recording should continue unless the objections made override the need to record an evidential encounter.

- 2.4.2.8. If the user decides to continue recording despite the objections of an individual, they should take steps (if practicable) to advise the individual(s) as to the following:
- The reason for the recording taking place – usually this will be for the prevention and detection of crime;
 - Non relevant material will only be retained for a maximum of 30 days;
 - The recording is made in order to act as a corroboration of the encounter.

2.4.3. Stopping Recording

- 2.4.3.1. Unless the incident is subject to a PIP, the decision to stop recording rests with the user. However, users should be satisfied that, in making the decision to stop recording the risk of not capturing evidential material is minimised. The rationale to stop recording should be explained prior to any de-activation.
- 2.4.3.2. Users should, under normal circumstances, cease recording in the following instances:
- It is no longer justifiable or proportionate to record – e.g. if, after investigation, there is no likelihood of evidential material being recovered or used;
 - The incident has concluded;
 - A different recording system takes primacy – e.g. When an arrested person arrives in custody, the BWV user should cease recording as the custody cameras will take primacy for recording the encounter with the subject. If, however, they continue to record they must tell the custody Sergeant that they are doing so.
- 2.4.3.3. Users may render themselves open to criticism or challenge if they cease recording too early or whilst an incident is ongoing. Therefore, recording should continue until it is clear that the points above are satisfied – for example by users recording themselves clearly leaving the scene or by making an announcement that a different recording system has taken over.

2.4.4. Post Incident.

- 2.4.4.1. In the event of an incident where the PIP is invoked users will continue to record until their arrival at the Post Incident Suite and will only cease recording under the authority of the PIM. This can either be in person or via telephone. BWV will provide corroborative proof of the delivery of the 'no conferring warning' at/near the scene as soon as practicable once the scene is secured, as well as evidence of the scene itself. NOTE: this is the user's corroboration evidence and is not a mechanism for recording the scene on behalf of the investigation bodies.

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- 2.4.4.2. Recording of key police witnesses (KPW) involved in the incident en route to the PIM suite will also provide confirmation that officers did not confer about the incident in transit.
- 2.4.4.3. The PIM or nominated person where practicable will ensure a further no conferring warning is given to KPWs on arrival at the PIM suite. Unless there are extenuating circumstances as above this should be done prior to the PIM authority to discontinue recording.
- 2.4.4.4. Once the PIM has directed the recording to cease, this will be recorded in the PIM log.
- 2.4.4.5. The PIM must ensure the need to continue recording once the officers have arrived at the PIM suite is justified and that it does not impinge on their rights to privacy and legal privilege. Careful consideration is required to balance the needs of the officers and the need for a transparent and open PIP process.
- 2.4.4.6. Once recording has ceased the process for data storage and viewing must be adhered to – see Section 6 below.
- 2.4.4.7. For officers who are retained at the scene, the PIM in consultation with the investigating bodies may make the decision to instruct the officers to cease recording if there is no further evidential gain or other justification.
- 2.4.4.8. The PIM will endeavour to appoint independent officers who will be allocated to remain with the KPWs and travel with them to the PIM suite. These officers are known as Appointed Officers and their role is to ensure the integrity of the investigation and can provide continuity in circumstances where the cameras fail or running out of battery following a protracted armed operation.
- 2.4.4.9. Once the PIM has given the instruction to switch off BWV cameras, they will be bagged and sealed. A competent operator, not involved in the operation, will then download the footage to ensure that the KPWs are not accused of wiping any evidence and that they do not view the footage prior to Stage 3 of the PIP (detailed account).

2.4.5. Post Incident Accounts.

- 2.4.5.1 There is a requirement under APP Armed Policing – Providing Accounts, for officers, subject to legal, federation and where necessary medical advice, to provide a personal initial account before going off duty (Stage 3 account). This should consist only of their individual recollection of events and should be written, signed and dated. The purpose of their account is to record their role, what they believe to be the essential facts and should, where relevant outline the honestly held belief that resulted in their use of force.
- 2.4.5.2 It is essential that a KPW provides the most complete personal initial account that they are able while their memory is most intact and unaffected, (Stage 3). A KPW should

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provide an initial account based solely on their personal recollection of the incident, to preserve the integrity of their evidence and avoid contamination from post-event information.

- 2.4.5.3 Detailed accounts (Stage 4) should not normally be obtained immediately. They can be left until the officers involved in the incident are better able to articulate their experience in a coherent format. This is usually after at least 48 hours has elapsed. The detailed account should include, if relevant, why the witness considered the use of force and discharge of firearms to be absolutely necessary.
- 2.4.5.4 Officers will NOT routinely be permitted to view their own or other officers BWV footage prior to the recording of their Personal Initial Account (Stage 3). The decision to allow an officer to view BWV footage prior to a personal initial account will be made by the PIM in consultation with the IA and IIO/PSD
- 2.4.5.5 Viewing BWV at an appropriate time may assist the KPW in recalling specific details, particularly sequencing of events in complex or protracted incidents. It may also help ensure accuracy in describing the use of force and its justification or assist with recall of critical evidence such as location of objects, demeanour of individuals, or environmental conditions.
- 2.4.5.1. A Senior Investigating Officers (SIO), in consultation with the PIM, may in safety critical situations direct viewing of the BWV to take place prior to the provision of Personal Initial Accounts as this may assist with the initial investigation and reduce the identified risks. If viewing does take place full details of what has been viewed and by whom must be recorded. If an officer involved in the incident views the footage this must be recorded in their statements of evidence and must include whose BWV footage was viewed, what was viewed and the rationale for it.
- 2.4.5.2. Any decision regarding the point at which a KPW views BWV (stage 3 or 4) should be made following careful consideration of the circumstances and the implications for the KPWs memory and recall. The decision, and supporting rationale, relating to the point at which a KPW views their BWV must be recorded by the PIM following consultation with the IIA and IIO/PSD.
- 2.4.5.3. It may be appropriate for one KPW to view another person's BWV footage, for example, where two officers/members of staff were acting in close proximity and one BWV did not record. Where the BWV has recorded footage which provides a significantly different perspective than a KPWs personal BWV would have captured it should not be viewed.
- 2.4.5.4. The PIP must be open, transparent and capable of withstanding scrutiny. If any officer has concerns that the integrity of the process is not being maintained, they must immediately bring this to the attention of the PIM.

2.4.6. BWV Data Retrieval

- 2.4.6.1. All BWV footage must be uploaded onto the secure server prior to an officer going off duty as per the instructions with the main force BWV procedure. This will be the case unless 4.4.9 of this policy applies and the footage is part of a PIM and the cameras are bagged and sealed.
- 2.4.6.2. Once a recording has been completed, the recorded data becomes police information and is subject to the rules in APP Information Management.
- 2.4.6.3. The anonymity of officers involved in an incident must be taken into account, particularly where the PIP has been invoked. Any BWV footage taken will be subject to disclosure rules under the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Oversight and ownership - JOU ACC Operations – Has responsibility for TVP and Hampshire Joint Operations Unit
- 3.2. JOU Firearms SMT – C.I. with functional responsibilities for individual firearms strands. Includes Supt with overall responsibility for Firearms Department.
- 3.3. Effected - Force Gold – Holds Strategic ownership of issues effecting the Constabulary.
- 3.4. Strategic Firearms Commanders - Determines the strategic objectives and sets any tactical parameters. Retains strategic oversight and overall command and responsibility.
- 3.5. Tactical Firearms Commanders - Develops, commands and coordinates the overall tactical response in accordance with strategic objectives.
- 3.6. Operational Firearms Commanders - Commands a group of officers carrying out functional or territorial responsibilities related to a tactical plan.
- 3.7. Tactical Advisers - provide tactical advice in respect of the tactics.
- 3.8. Authorised Firearms Officers – Officers selected, trained and authorised to carry firearms.
- 3.9. PIM – Post Incident Manager. Facilitates investigation upon death or serious injury.

4. Other related policies, procedures, guidance and information sources

4.1. Related policies and procedures

- 33302 JOU Tactical Firearms - Management Command & Deployment of Armed Officers

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- 33300 JOU Tactical Firearms Policy
- 33306 JOU - Tactical Firearms - Post Incident Management and Investigation

4.2. Related guidance

Human Rights Certification

This policy has been drafted in accordance with the Human Rights Act and the principles underpinning it.

(i) Legal Basis

This policy is underpinned by the:

Human Rights Act 1998;
Data Protection Act 2018; and the
APP Armed Policing.

(ii) Human Rights Articles Engaged

This policy has the potential to engage the following Articles:

Article 2 – Right to Life
Article 5 - Right to Liberty
Article 6 – Right to a Fair Trial

Management of Police Information (MoPI)

Implementation of this policy will enable the Force to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice on the Management of Police Information.

Data Protection

Implementation of this policy will enable the Force to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and associated General Data Protection Regulation.

Freedom of Information Act

This policy document can be made available under the Freedom of Information Act.

Protective Markings

This policy document shall be marked as Official.

Health & Safety at Work

Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment)(DSE) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health & Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002 shall be considered in regard to enactment of this policy where information is held on Display Screen Equipment (DSE).

4.3. Information sources

APP - Firearms

Version:	2.3
Last updated:	07/08/2026
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Risk:	High
Owning department:	Firearms