



POLICY NAME	Police Body Cam Policy	POLICY NO.	SAEM505
APPROVING BODY	President/Cabinet	VERSION NO.	01
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	Student Affairs & Enrollment Management – Campus Policy		
EFFECTIVE DATE	01-JUN-2025	REVIEW/REVISION DATE	01-JUN-2025

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a procedure for the proper use of all Body Camera equipment utilized by Western New Mexico University (WNMU) personnel as well as the storage and management of the recordings.

POLICY:

It is the policy of WNMU to use mobile audio-visual recording equipment for purposes of, including but not limited to, capturing evidence for use in criminal prosecutions, training, evaluation of work performance, etc.

This policy applies to all personnel issued mobile audio-visual recording equipment and portable audio recorders.

REF: [SB-8 Law Enforcement Body Cams](#)

DEFINITIONS:

- A. **BWC-Body Worn Camera** - an electronic device worn on a person's body that records both audio and video data.
- B. **Community Caretaking** – A task undertaken by a law enforcement officer in which the officer is performing an articulable act unrelated to the investigation of a crime. The "community caretaking" function includes, but is not limited to, participating in town halls or other community outreach, helping a child find his or her parents, providing death notifications, and performing in-home or hospital wellbeing checks on the sick, elderly, or persons presumed missing.
- C. **Law Enforcement / Investigative Encounter** – dispatched call for service, traffic stop, violent crime scene when civilian subjects are present, investigative interviews, motor vehicle accident investigation when participants of the crash are present, encounters with suspicious persons or emotionally disturbed persons, public drunkenness or disorderly conduct, interaction with field contacts, arrests, execution of a warrant, situations in which weapons are actually or alleged to be present, use of force and any non-investigative encounter that becomes adversarial after the initial contact.

- D. **Non-Law Enforcement / Investigative Encounter** – The following situations are not considered investigative encounters and shall not require initiation of BWC – normal, everyday interactions with the public that are not part of a call for service or otherwise involve a law enforcement function. Examples include community caretaking or general conversations with the public. However, if any non-investigative encounter becomes adversarial after the initial contact the officer shall engage their BWC as soon as it is safe to do so.
- E. **Uniform Officer**- Commissioned personnel who are outwardly displaying clothing that clearly identifies themselves to the public as law enforcement. These publicly identifiable officers are the members of the agency who routinely interact with the public.

GUIDELINES:

WNMU uniform officers are required to record investigative encounters whether or not they are being recorded some other way.

For example: if a DWI officer is recording using the in-car camera, he still needs to record his entire encounter on his body camera. This would also be true if an officer is questioning someone in a room that has a camera that is recording. The officer would still be required to record the interview on his body camera.

There are certain circumstances where Officers in a proactive (non-dispatched) capacity may become involved in a situation requiring immediate action to prevent injury, make an arrest and/or prevent the destruction of evidence or escape. When these situations occur, officers should activate their BWC. If the immediate activation of the BWC is not feasible due to immediate risk to the safety of the officer or others, the officer will activate the BWC at the first available opportunity after the immediate threat has abated.

The safety of WNMU personnel and the public shall always take precedence over the ability to record an incident. However, officers should always make every effort to safely record all applicable incidents. In the event an incident arises where an officer was unable to activate their BWC, this incident shall (May) immediately be reported to the Chief and notify dispatch. (note in CAD) It will be the responsibility of the Chief to immediately investigate and document the incident in order to ensure the accuracy of events.

The Department has adopted the use of BWC to accomplish several objectives, including but not limited to:

- A. Collect evidence by assisting with accurate documentation of events, actions, conditions, and statements made during arrests and critical incidents, thereby enhancing officer's reports, evidence collection, and court testimony.
- B. Enhance the Department's ability to review procedures and probable cause for arrest, officer-suspect interaction, and use for officer evaluation and training.
- C. Protect officers from false claims of improper conduct and other frivolous claims.

Reference the operational procedures for Body Worn Cameras at the following link:
[SOP505_Policy Body Cam Procedures](#)