



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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September 25, 2024

TO: Supervisor Lindsay P. Horvath, Chair
Supervisor Hilda Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
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FROM: Max Huntsman
Inspector General

SUBJECT: **ELEVENTH REPORT BACK ON IMPLEMENTING BODY-WORN
CAMERAS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

Purpose of Memorandum

On September 24, 2019, the Board of Supervisors passed a motion directing the Office of Inspector General, in consultation with other County Departments, to monitor and report on: (1) the progress of the implementation of technology infrastructure upgrades at patrol stations and other locations as needed for body-worn cameras; and (2) the receipt of a final body-worn camera policy from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's (Sheriff's Department), with such policy to address the elements raised by the Board of Supervisors. This is the Office of Inspector General's eleventh report back on the progress of the Sheriff's Department's implementation of body-worn cameras.

Body-Worn Camera Equipment Procurement and Deployment

The Department has issued 4,195 body-worn cameras (BWCs) to patrol and field operation deputies. There has been no change in that number since the last published report.

The Sheriff's Department reports ongoing issues deploying BWCs to the Community Colleges Bureau and County Services Bureau due to the continuing need for

infrastructure upgrades. Originally, the Department anticipated that it would deploy BWCs to the Community College Bureau by 2022. As of our last report on March 26, 2024, the Department estimated that it would complete deployment by end of summer 2024. The Department's network vendor now projects completion by November 2024. The County Services Bureau has also been plagued with infrastructure challenges, such as asbestos abatement, at many of the approximately 76 different locations it serves throughout the County. Thus far, the Sheriff's Department has completed work at 58 of these 76 locations. The Department has provided no timeline as to when the other infrastructure build outs will be completed.

Body-Worn Cameras in Custody

As of the Office of Inspector General's previous report on BWCs in March 2024, the Sheriff's Department reported it had purchased but not yet deployed 2,068 BWCs for all its Custody Operations deputies, sergeants, and custody assistants working at Twin Towers (TTCF) and the Inmate Reception Center (IRC). Both facilities have the necessary infrastructure in place to support BWC deployment. The Department is requesting additional funding to purchase 2,573 cameras for the remaining custodial facilities. As of writing this report, that request to the Board of Supervisors is still pending.

Before the Department can deploy BWCs at any of these facilities, it must codify policies for their use in a custodial environment, which poses inherent differences from the patrol setting in which the Department now uses BWCs. The Department reports that in June 2024, it held "Meet and Confer" sessions with impacted employee unions to discuss the draft policies for BWC use in custodial facilities.¹ The Department has no firm timeline for completing the meet and confer process, and BWCs cannot be deployed prior to those policies being codified.

Discipline

Between February 1, 2024, and August 1, 2024, the Department opened 30 administrative investigations into potential violations of the Department's BWC policies.

¹When adopting policies that affect the wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment, the Sheriff's Department must meet and confer with its employees unions to discuss the policies or their effects pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Sheriff's Department and its employee unions and state and local laws. (See California Government Code section 3505 and Los Angeles County Code section 5.04.090.)

During the same time period, the Department imposed discipline on 67 employees who violated the Department's BWC policies, ranging from written reprimand to suspension.

In our [previous BWC report](#), the Office of Inspector General recommended implementing policies regarding the auditing of compliance with BWC activation. The Office of Inspector General inquired as to whether any policies have been drafted or implemented regarding employee or supervisor responses to emails notifying deputies and supervisors of activation issues and mis-tagging of videos and whether any policies have been drafted or implemented regarding use of the BWC compliance dashboard as a way to address noncompliance through counseling, performance evaluations, or discipline. In response to our inquiry, the Sheriff's Department reported that the Department is drafting an updated BWC policy for the increased review of BWC video for BWC activation and proper tagging.² However, at this time, the Department does not plan to create policy on how supervisors should handle the dashboard's automatically generated emails regarding possible noncompliance with activation or inaccurate tagging, because irregularities in the CAD and Axon data may cause the dashboard to display incorrect data. The Department informed us that it is working on correcting this issue. It is the Department's position that it should not create a policy directing supervisors to a dashboard that potentially displays incorrect information and noted that the dashboard is a tool that *may* indicate noncompliance but should not be used exclusively to determine noncompliance.

The Office of Inspector General supports increasing supervisor review of BWC video for compliance and agrees that the dashboard should not be used exclusively to measure policy compliance. Indeed, our prior report recognized that the dashboard flags only *potential* noncompliance, which requires additional review by the involved deputies and supervisors to determine whether employees used BWCs in accordance with policy. As our report observed, the system provides "a powerful tool to identify, analyze, and monitor potential noncompliance with BWC policy." But as long as the Department continues to have the dashboard send automated emails flagging potential noncompliance, concerns about data accuracy do not lessen (and perhaps may increase) the need for guidance on how deputies and supervisors should use those emails. If the Department has identified serious issues with the accuracy of the dashboard's automated notifications, it should inform staff which notifications may be inaccurate and consider halting them while it resolves those issues. And if any

² BWC policies for custody personnel remain in the drafting phase, meaning that the changes to review process will apply only to patrol deputies using BWCs at least until the Department drafts and implements custody policies for BWCs, and then only to the extent those policies mirror the patrol policies.

notifications remain reliable indicators of potential noncompliance, the Office of Inspector General continues to recommend that the Department provide supervisors clear direction on how to use and respond to those emails.

c: Robert Luna, Sheriff
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Dawyn R. Harrison, County Counsel
Sharmaine Moseley, Executive Director, Sheriff's Civilian Oversight Commission