



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

312 SOUTH HILL STREET, THIRD FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90013
(213) 974-6100
<http://oig.lacounty.gov>

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS
HOLLY J. MITCHELL
LINDSEY P. HORVATH
JANICE HAHN
KATHRYN BARGER

MAX HUNTSMAN
INSPECTOR GENERAL

March 25, 2025

TO: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Janice Hahn

FROM: Max Huntsman
Inspector General

SUBJECT: **TWELFTH 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 twelfth 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 not issued any additional body-worn cameras (BWCs) to patrol and field operation deputies since the Office of Inspector General's last report issued on September 25, 2024, and the total remains at 4,195 BWCs.

As of our last report, the Sheriff's Department progressed in readiness to deploy BWCs to Community Colleges Bureau and County Services Bureau, two bureaus that lacked sufficient infrastructure necessary for the implementation of BWCs. Community Colleges Bureau reports that it has only one campus left to be upgraded before the

Department can deploy cameras to its personnel. While deployment was delayed during the infrastructure upgrades, the Sheriff's Department reports it tentatively plans on deploying the BWCs to the Community College Bureau in April 2025 and it is in the early planning stages for deployment to County Services Bureau.

County Services Bureau has been plagued with infrastructure challenges such as asbestos abatement at many of the 76 different locations it serves. As of the last report, improvements were finished at 58 structures, and as of this report the Department has completed a total of 73 upgrades, leaving only 3 remaining locations to be updated in order to outfit staff in these units with BWCs.

Body-Worn Cameras in Custody

Thus far, the Department purchased a total of 2,068 BWCs for Twin Towers and Inmate Reception Center, and 1,553 for Men's Central Jail and Century Regional Detention Facility. In the coming year, it plans to buy another 1,020 cameras for the Pitchess Detention Center. In anticipation of this purchase, the Department started working on updating the facility's infrastructure to be ready when the cameras arrive. By July 2026, the Department plans to have a total of 4,641 cameras for custody operations.

The 3,621 cameras for the custodial facilities remain undeployed. The Department reports that the main obstacle remaining to their deployment in custody is the lack of an agreement between the Department and its employee unions for policies on the use and activation of BWCs in the custodial environment. As reported in our eleventh report, the Department is in meet and confer sessions with its employee unions on the adoption of an addition to the Custody Division Manual of a policy on use of BWCs in custodial facilities.¹ The Department reports that in the months following the June 2024 meet and confer sessions the Department and its two employee unions, one representing deputies and the other custody assistants, continue to negotiate to come to a consensus on policy terms acceptable to all parties and comply with state laws on BWCs. BWCs will not be deployed until these policies are codified, leaving custody personnel without the use of the supply of BWCs already purchased for use in custodial facilities.

¹ When adopting policies that affect the terms and conditions of employment, the Sheriff's Department must negotiate with its employees' unions to discuss the policies or their effects. These negotiations are commonly referred to as meet and confer sessions. As set forth by California Government Code section 3505, Los Angeles County section 5.04.080, and the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the parties, employee union representative(s) and the Sheriff's Department are obligated to meet to discuss policy changes that could affect wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment.

Failures to Activate Body-Worn Cameras in a Timely Fashion

While nearly all patrol stations had BWCs deployed by the third quarter of 2021, timely activation of BWCs still appears to be an issue even in critical incidents. For example, in a recent deputy-involved shooting that occurred on December 10, 2024, in East Los Angeles, deputies failed to activate their cameras timely. Three deputies at the East Los Angeles station responded to a call stating a person with a gun in his waistband was inside a store. The deputies got out of their patrol cars and took cover behind their open cars' doors but failed to activate their BWCs as they exited their vehicles, contrary to Department training. Even while engaging with the suspect, including commands to drop his gun, none of the deputies turned on their BWCs prior to the fatal shooting. An investigation revealed that the item in the suspect's hand was a BB gun.²

While two of the deputies activated their cameras shortly after the shooting, capturing the Department's pre-programmed automatic buffering period of preceding 60 seconds before the activation. While the buffering period captures the video, it does not capture audio. As such, we cannot hear any of the deputies' commands to the man before they shot him.³ The Department posted a [Critical Incident Briefing](#) on its website with video from the deputies' BWCs.

This is one recent example of deputies failing to activate their BWCs as required by Department policy and in a timely fashion during critical incidents.⁴ Over the past several months, at Executive Force Review Committee (EFRC) meetings, Office of Inspector General representatives noted several cases where deputies have failed to activate BWCs as required, thereby failing to preserve evidence of the incident. In a number of EFRC reviews, EFRC panelists, who are Sheriff's Department command

² A more detailed summary of this deputy-involved shooting is in our report, [Reform and Oversight Efforts: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department - October to December 2024](#).

³ As this incident remains under review, the Department reports that no official determinations as to BWC activation have been made. Further analysis may be appropriate once the investigative and administrative reviews are complete.

⁴ In response to this report, the Sheriff's Department commented: "Timely activation of body-worn cameras (BWCs) can present challenges in dynamic and rapidly evolving situations, particularly given the Department's current manual activation system, which requires user-initiated engagement. In such cases, a margin for error is inherent. Pursuant to MPP section 3-06/200.10, failure to activate a BWC when activation is impracticable or unsafe does not constitute a policy violation. The Department has implemented ongoing improvements—including targeted training, reinforcement of muscle memory, and accountability measures—to reduce untimely activations. These efforts have contributed to a Department-wide activation compliance rate of approximately 95.65% in 2024, with some patrol stations exceeding 97%. The administrative review of the referenced incident remains pending."

staff echoed our staff's concerns over the failure to activate BWCs in violation of Department policy. The panelists have sometimes sought disciplinary action but at other times asked that the deputies be sent for re-training. There have also been panel requests for station supervisors to do a station-wide re-briefing of the BWC policies to stress the importance of policy compliance and timely activation.

After a critical incident occurs, such as a shooting, it often takes years before an EFRC review and critique of the incident that includes addressing policy and tactical violations. It is unclear what impact the EFRC panelists recommendations will have to prevent recurring policy failures regarding BWCs.⁵ The panelists' recommendation to have personnel be re-briefed on the importance of timely activation seems to be a step in the right direction to ensure deputies are repeatedly reminded of their obligations to use and timely activate BWCs. Repeated messaging, however, must be combined with the use of the BWC dashboard. The Office of Inspector General reiterates that the Department must direct and train supervisors on how to use this tool to get personnel to comply with BWC policies. Using this tool in real-time, with daily, weekly and monthly monitoring, may help supervisors identify deputies who habitually fail to activate their cameras in a timely fashion. This may in turn help supervisors mentor these deputies to change these habits and help build deputies' muscle memory to activate them when in a high adrenaline situation. By repeatedly messaging the importance of BWCs and by actively monitoring deputies' use of BWC, there may be a reduction in the number of incidents where the public and the investigators are left with inadequate or no footage of a critical incident.

c: Robert G. Luna, Sheriff
Fesia Davenport, Chief Executive Officer
Edward Yen, Executive Officer
Dawyn R. Harrison, County Counsel
Sharmaine Moseley, Executive Director, Sheriff's Civilian Oversight Commission

⁵ Usually, EFRC panelists hear and critique incidents where Department personnel were involved in deputy-involved shootings, or where the deputies' actions caused great bodily injury, such as broken bones. If it is a shooting case where the deputy shot and hit someone, the Department's Homicide Bureau will first present the case to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for criminal filing consideration. It is only after the prosecutors have rendered their decision will the Department proceed with an EFRC panel critique of the use of force. Prosecutors can sometimes take a year, if not more, to make such filing decisions. For that reason, critiquing deputies' actions can be delayed for years.