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September 24, 2026

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

FROM: Eric Bates *Eric Bates*
Interim Inspector General

SUBJECT: **FIFTEENTH 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 for body-worn cameras (BWCs) at patrol stations and other locations as needed; and (2) the receipt of a final body-worn camera policy from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's Department), with such policy to address the elements raised by the Board of Supervisors. This is the Office of Inspector General's fifteenth report back on the progress of the Sheriff's Department's implementation of body-worn cameras.

Body-worn Cameras in Custody

On August 3, 2026, Pitchess Detention Center (PDC) North received BWCs. PDC South and PDC-East are the next facilities scheduled for BWC deployment. The South facility is currently in the process of upgrading the infrastructure necessary for deployment. Because the East facility is minimally staffed, it will be the last facility to receive BWCs. As of September 16, 2026, 2,979 BWCs have been deployed across all custody facilities.

Deploying BWCs in the Los Angeles County jails presents unique challenges that differ substantially from the challenges that were encountered when deploying the technology to patrol operations. BWC technology has a critical cellular phone component that allows personnel to use the Axon application to capture photos, videos, and view BWC

videos per policy, and complete the required evidence tagging prior to docking the camera at the end of shift. The antiquated custodial facilities are constructed with reinforced concrete, which means most areas have limited to no cellular service. Unlike patrol, custody devices rely entirely on the Department's Wi-Fi network for connectivity, which was not of sufficient quality to provide access at all times in all locations where access is required inside the facilities. To address this technological problem, the Department assessed wireless coverage inside the jails, including identifying areas where personnel routinely would use the devices – for instance by looking at different housing modules, intake areas, and control rooms. After identifying connectivity gaps, the BWC Unit updated the wireless configurations and replaced underperforming technology. Custody personnel now have reliable access to Wi-Fi and use all Axon phone applications, including for authentication and password resets, and are able to utilize the accompanying evidence management software anywhere within the facilities.

In addition, custody-issued devices require different interfaces tailored for the jail environment. Per state and local laws and Department policy, cellphones are not allowed in the custodial facilities. To ensure both security and access to all BWC features, custody devices are restricted to essential business applications only to ensure compliance and reduce erroneously accessing applications other than the Axon BWC tools.

Outstanding BWC Deployments

The Department reportedly plans to increase the number of specialized units that have BWCs, with planned deployment to Special Enforcement Bureau, Detective Division, and Emergency Operations Bureau. The Office of Inspector General has repeatedly recommended that **all** special units deploy BWCs.¹ Most recently, in OIG's report [Reform and Oversight Efforts: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department - January to March 2026](#), a summary of a deputy-involved shooting during the execution of a search warrant noted that the Narcotics Bureau personnel executing the warrant were not equipped with BWCs. Because of this, there is no BWC video of the shooting. Footnote 11 of that report notes that the recommendation for equipping all specialized units with BWCs was made in OIG's [sixth](#) and [seventh body-worn camera](#) reports. In fact, OIG's [Eighth Report Back on Implementing Body-Worn Cameras in Los Angeles County](#) referenced newly-elected Sheriff Luna's stated goal to equip specialized units with BWCs. The only units noted for exception in that report were the Internal Criminal Investigations Bureau, the Internal Affairs Bureau, and the Homicide Bureau; the stated reason for exempting these units is because of each unit's policies that all interviews be recorded.

¹ By making this recommendation OIG was not suggesting that all specialized units that do not interface with the public be equipped with BWCs. The recommendation was not intended to require personnel who interact primarily with other LASD personnel to record those interactions.

Labor negotiations were referenced in the OIG's [thirteenth report](#) on BWCs, issued **a year ago**, seemingly as the reason for the continued delay. It is not clear to OIG why such negotiations are necessary given that the Department's BWC policies in its Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) **apply to all Department personnel**. Thus far, the Department reported meeting seven times with employee labor unions to discuss BWC policies, which include the deployment of BWCs to special units. These seven meetings are the number of negotiation sessions combined for PPOA and ALADS, as each union has requested to meet separately. As the Department did not provide information on the start date for these negotiations, it is unclear when negotiations began, but in a list of negotiations provided to the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission there is an open negotiation covering the MPP on BWC with a start date of September 23, 2024.² If this noted negotiation includes deploying cameras to specialized units, they have been ongoing for two years. Of course, the list does not specify the particular subject of the BWC policy being negotiated.

While the Court Services Division is not projected to receive BWCs, its Levy Crew unit, which is responsible for conducting evictions, is already equipped with BWCs.

Other units/divisions not projected to get BWCs include:

- Professionals Standards Division (housed within this division are units, such as Internal Affairs and Internal Criminal Investigation Bureau);
- Administrative Services Division (housed within this division are units which handle administrative tasks, such as dealing with contract cities and facilities);
- Personnel Command (housed within this division are units, such as Training Bureau and Psychological Services Bureau);
- Technology and Support Division (housed within this division are units, such as Scientific Services Unit and Communication and Fleet Management Unit);
- Homicide Bureau, which is housed under the Detective Division, is not projected to get BWCs as it has little to no enforcement functions; and
- Aero Bureau, which is housed under Special Enforcement Division, is not projected to get BWCs as its personnel are not typically involved in enforcement functions.

The Office of Inspector General continues to recommend that all specialized units that engage in investigative functions or interact regularly with the public be equipped with BWCs.

² On one of the lists provided to the COC, there is a notation of another open negotiation on BWC policy with a start date of November 7, 2019. This start date predates Sheriff Luna's tenure; while the list indicates it is open, it also notes that the resolution was a revised policy and the length of time to completion was one month, meaning it's likely that the revised policy was adopted and negotiations are actually closed.

BWC Policy on Activation

In the Office of Inspector General's [*Fifth Report Back on Implementing Body-Worn Cameras in Los Angeles County*](#), OIG noted that during the early stages of the rollout of the cameras there was a pattern of delays in activating BWCs. In some instances, deputies waited until the incident escalated before turning them on, which suggested a violation of Department policy. The Department's policy states that deputies shall activate the camera for any investigative or enforcement contacts. OIG recommended the Department adopt a blanket policy to activate the BWC for **any civilian contact**, which is a better policy and provided examples of situations for which preservation of a recording of the contact is important.³ Part of the problem with the current Department policy is that it also delineates examples requiring activation, which tend to serve as guidelines suggesting that activation may not be required in situations other than the listed examples, when, in fact, activation is, or at least should be, required.

The BWC activation policy in [MPP 3-06/200.8](#) states as follows:

Department personnel shall activate their body worn camera (BWC) prior to initiating, or upon arrival at, any enforcement or investigative contact involving a member of the public, including all:

- Vehicle stops;
- Pedestrian stops (including self-initiated consensual encounters);
- Calls for service;
- Code-3 responses, including vehicle pursuits;
- Foot pursuits;
- Searches;
- Arrests;
- Uses of force, including any transportation of the subject;
- In-custody transports of persons who are uncooperative, belligerent, or threatening;
- Suspect, victim, and witness interviews (except as indicated in the Manual of Policy and Procedures section 3-06/200.18, Body Worn Camera Recording Exceptions); and/or

³ As noted in the eighth report: delays in activation are the reason why "the Office of Inspector General recommended that the Sheriff's Department have a blanket policy that BWCs should be turned on for any contact with a civilian, not only for investigative or enforcement contacts. For example, when contacting an individual in response to a call for service, the BWC should be activated; when a deputy is approaching to execute a warrant as the deputies approach the location, per policy they shall turn on their cameras; when they approach civilians to speak to them, deputies should be turning on the cameras. In these real-life examples, the situation has not yet escalated and turning the BWC on before the contact ensures that the camera will be on if the situation escalates. It must be made clear to deputies that it is their responsibility to ensure all contacts with civilians must be captured from the beginning."

- Any encounter with a member of the public who is or becomes uncooperative, belligerent, or otherwise hostile.

Department personnel may activate their BWC for the following reasons:

- Transportation of a member of the public; and/or
- Other investigative or enforcement activities where, in the Department member's judgment, a video recording would assist in the investigation or prosecution of a crime or when a recording of an encounter would assist in documenting the incident for later investigation or review.

Recently, deputies responding to an assault with a deadly weapon call did not have their cameras activated in route to the call and were in an accident. The notification stated that because the deputies were responding non-Code 3, their BWCs were not activated. The problem evidenced by the excusal for not activating the cameras is that the policy requires activation for all investigative contact but does not include activation while in route unless the deputies are responding Code 3.⁴ The policy should require activation when in route to an investigation because it is a better policy to activate the cameras on the way to the call as the situation could escalate once on the scene. Had the deputies been responding Code 3, activation would have been required while in route. In this instance, activation may have preserved evidence of the accident, which resulted in injury to a civilian driver.

The Office of Inspector General continues to recommend that the BWC policy be broadened to include activation for all contact with civilians and that activation be required when responding to any call for service.

Buffering Time

In its [report](#) on the Sheriff's Department's reform and oversight efforts covering the second quarter of 2026, the Office of Inspector General discussed the evidentiary value of increasing the buffering period for BWCs from 60 seconds to 120 seconds.⁵ The Office of Inspector General continues to recommend that the Sheriff's Department assess the feasibility, costs, labor considerations, and operational benefits of increasing the BWC pre-event buffer from 60 seconds to 120 seconds and determine whether such a change would enhance the Department's accountability, transparency, and investigative objectives.

⁴ Code 3 is defined in [MPP 5-09/200.15](#): A proper code 3 response consists of operating an authorized emergency vehicle with red light and sounding a siren, as may be reasonably necessary, and operating that vehicle with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway ([Refer to 21055 CVC](#)).

⁵ LAPD, the most similar agency to the Sheriff's Department in size, jurisdiction, and in adoption of 21st Century policing principles, has a 120-second buffer.

BWC Equipment Updates

The Department first deployed BWCs in 2020. At that time, personnel received Axon Body Camera 3 and Samsung S20 phones. Since then, the BWC Unit has upgraded the devices to Axon Body Camera 4 and Samsung S24 to maintain reliability, battery performance, and compatibility with current software. The BWC Unit is currently conducting an Axon Body 4 lifecycle refresh for patrol personnel to ensure optimal battery life and long-term device performance. This refresh involves replacing existing Axon Body 4 cameras with new units of the same model (Axon has not released a newer generation of BWCs). The refresh has been fully completed for the South Patrol Division and is currently underway in the Central Patrol Division. Based on current deployment rates, the refresh project is on track to be completed by the end of this year. Upon completion, approximately 4,000 Axon Body 4 cameras assigned to patrol personnel will have been replaced.

Sheriff's Department Response

The Sheriff's Department was provided with a draft of this report. The letter from the Department sent in response is appended.

c: Robert G. Luna, Sheriff
Joseph M. Nicchitta, Chief Executive Officer
Edward Yen, Executive Officer
Dawyn R. Harrison, County Counsel
Sharmaine Moseley, Executive Director, Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF



September 23, 2026

Mr. Eric D. Bates
Interim Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
County of Los Angeles
500 West Temple Street, Suite 383
Los Angeles, California 90013

Sent via Electronic Transmission

Dear Interim Inspector General Bates:

**RESPONSE TO THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT
FIFTEENTH REPORT BACK ON IMPLEMENTING
BODY-WORN CAMERAS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

On September 11, 2026, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) provided the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) with a validation draft of its report titled, *Fifteenth Report Back on Implementing Body-Worn Cameras in Los Angeles County*, and requested a response by close of business September 23, 2026, ("Draft Report"). We thank the OIG for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Report.

The Draft Report was shared with the Department units responsible for the Body-Worn Camera (BWC) program for their initial review. The units provided clarifications, such as corrections in figures and similar adjustments, which were forwarded to the OIG and incorporated into its second draft. However, there are some portions of the report that warrant a formal Department response to provide additional context regarding the current status of BWC implementation across the Department.

The following addresses the areas identified during the Department's review of the Draft Report:

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Outstanding BWC Deployments

Regarding the Department's engagement in the ongoing meet-and-confer process related to BWC policy revisions, the Department informed the OIG of the number of meetings held and noted that the process remains active. While the OIG expresses concern that these negotiations can create delays despite existing policy, labor laws generally treat new surveillance technology as a mandatory subject of bargaining, which limits the Department's ability to implement changes unilaterally.

The Department continues to work with its labor partners to finalize the BWC policy revisions, recognizing the need to provide further guidance to Department members, to expand the use of BWCs to additional areas of the Department including specialized units, and to support ongoing transparency efforts.

BWC Policy on Activation

Citing its Fifth Report Back on implementing BWC dated September 28, 2021, the OIG recommended that the Department adopt a blanket policy requiring activation for any civilian contact, which it characterizes as a superior approach. The OIG further stated that examples listed in the current policy may inadvertently imply that activation is not required in situations beyond those specific examples, even when activation should occur. In the current Draft Report, the OIG reiterates this same recommendation for a blanket activation policy.

Because the policy revisions are in meet-and-confer, making the specific elements of the revisions and negotiations private, the Department can provide general context regarding the portions of the policy being considered for revision. This includes several areas of [Manual of Policy and Procedures, Section 3-06/200.08, Body Worn Cameras – Activation](#). The revision would expand on the types of examples where BWC activation would be mandatory.

By adding more situations that require mandatory activation, the policy would capture a broader range of civilian contacts and provide clearer direction for personnel. This approach helps ensure that BWC usage more consistently reflects the Department's intent and reduces ambiguity about when activation is required.

Additionally, the Department is working to balance transparency with practicality, privacy, and operational clarity. While BWCs are an essential tool for accountability, they also serve as an evidentiary device. The policy must therefore align transparency goals with the practical needs of personnel and the privacy interests of the community.

Buffering Time

The OIG referenced its most recent [report](#) on the Department's reform and oversight efforts for the second quarter of 2026, in which it recommended increasing the BWC buffering period from the current 60 seconds to 120 seconds. In the current Draft Report, the OIG reiterates this recommendation, proposing that the Department assess the feasibility, costs, labor impacts, and operational benefits of expanding the pre-event buffer and determine whether such a change would enhance the Department's accountability, transparency, and investigative objectives.

The Department provided its response to the previous recommendation. The OIG's renewed recommendation has been noted, and at this time, the Department's position remains unchanged. The current 60-second pre-event buffer is supported by research, industry comparisons, and operational experience, and continues to provide meaningful pre-incident context while balancing workload, privacy, and resource considerations. The Department will continue to monitor developments in best practices and technology, but based on the evidence available, the 60-second buffer remains the most appropriate and effective setting.

Conclusion

The Department appreciates the OIG's continued attention to the BWC program and offers the above responses to support a clear understanding of our approach and decisions. We remain committed to maintaining a reliable, evidence-based system and to continuing transparent communication with your office as the program develops.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Commander Ernest Bille, Office of Constitutional Policing, at (323) 307-8358.

Sincerely,

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF



APRIL L. TARDY
UNDERSHERIFF