



City of Blackduck Police Department
Portable Audio / Video Recorders
Adopted: October 7, 2019 Updated: January 6, 2025

PORTABLE AUDIO / VIDEO RECORDERS

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the use of portable audio/video recording devices by members of this office while in the performance of their duties (Minn. Stat. § 626.8473). Portable audio /video recording devices include all recording systems whether body-worn, handheld or integrated into portable equipment.

This policy does not apply to mobile audio/video recordings, interviews or interrogations conducted at any City of Blackduck law enforcement, undercover operations, wiretaps or eavesdropping (concealed listening devices) unless captured by a portable recording system.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Portable recording system – A device worn by a member that is capable of both video and audio recording of the member’s activities and interactions with others or collecting digital multimedia evidence as part of an investigation and as provided in Minn. Stat. § 13.825.

POLICY

The Blackduck Police Department may provide members with access to portable recorders for use during the performance of their duties. The use of recorders is intended to enhance the mission of the department by accurately capturing contacts between members of the department and the public. Members of the Blackduck Police Department that violate this policy will be subject to progressive discipline.

MEMBER PRIVACY EXPECTATION

All recordings made by members on any department issued device at any time or while acting in an official capacity of the department, regardless of ownership of the device, shall remain the property of the department. Members shall have no expectation of privacy or ownership interest in the content of these recordings.

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Prior to going into service, each uniformed member will be responsible for making sure that they are equipped with a portable recorder issued by the department, and that the recorder is in good working order (Minn. Stat § 13.825). At the beginning of a member’s shift, they will turn on the portable recorder and insure it turns on, boots up, goes into standby mode, and is capable of being activated to initiate a recording. Officers will periodically check to insure the device is recording and offloading to the portable recorder server. If the recorder is not in working order or the member becomes aware of a malfunction at any time, the member shall promptly report the failure to their supervisor and obtain a functioning device as soon as reasonably practicable. **Uniformed officers must position body worn cameras at or above mid-line of the waist in a position that maximized the recording system’s capacity to record video footage of the officer’s activities or** otherwise notify persons that they are being recorded, whenever reasonably practicable. (Minn. Stat. § 626.8473).



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Any member assigned to a non-uniformed position may carry an approved portable recorder at any time the member believes that such a device may be useful. Unless conducting a lawful recording in an authorized undercover capacity, non-uniformed members should wear the recorder in a conspicuous manner when in use or otherwise notify persons that they are being recorded, whenever reasonably practicable.

When using a portable recorder, the assigned member shall record their name, employee number and the current date and time at the beginning and the end of the shift or other period of use, regardless of whether any activity was recorded. This procedure is not required when the recording device and related software captures the user's unique identification and the date and time of each recording.

Members should document the existence of a recording in any report or other official record of the contact, including any instance where the recorder malfunctioned or the member deactivated the recording (Minn. Stat. § 626.8473). Members should include the reason for deactivation.

Officers of the Blackduck Police Department shall follow this agency's body worn camera policy when acting under the command and control of another Chief Law Enforcement Officer or Federal Law Enforcement Official.

ACTIVATION OF THE AUDIO / VIDEO RECORDER

This policy is not intended to describe every possible situation in which the recorder should be used, although there are many situations where its use is appropriate. Members should activate the recorder any time the member believes it would be appropriate or valuable to record an incident.

The recorder should be activated in any of the following situations:

- a) All enforcement and investigative contacts including stops and field interview (FI) situations
- b) Traffic stops including, but not limited to, traffic violations, stranded motorist assistance and all crime interdiction stops.
- c) Self-initiated activity in which a member would normally notify the Communication Center.
- d) Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording.

Members should remain sensitive to the dignity of all individuals being recorded and exercise sound discretion to respect privacy by discontinuing recording whenever it reasonable appears to the member that such privacy may outweigh any legitimate law enforcement interest in recording. Requests by members of the public to stop recording should be considered using this same criterion. Recording should resume when privacy is no longer at issue unless the circumstances no longer fit the criteria for recording.

Officers will not activate or record with a portable recording device in the Beltrami County Jail Control Rooms or Administrative offices.



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At no time is a member expected to jeopardize their safety in order to activate a portable recorder or change the recording media. However, the recorder should be activated in situations described above as soon as reasonably practicable.

CESSATION OF RECORDING

Once activated, the portable recorder should remain on continuously until the member reasonably believes that their direct participation in the incident is complete or the situation no longer fits the criteria for activation. Recording may be stopped during significant periods of inactivity such as report writing or other breaks from direct participation in the incident. When ceasing the recording, the officer shall narrate the intent and reason, if applicable, then ending the recording.

SURREPTITIOUS RECORDINGS

Minnesota law permits an individual to surreptitiously record any conversation in which one party to the conversation has given their permission. (Minn. Stat. §626A.02)

Members of the department may surreptitiously record any conversation during the course of a criminal investigation in which the member reasonably believes that such a recording will be lawful and beneficial to the investigation.

Members shall not surreptitiously record another department member without a court order unless lawfully authorized by the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

Many portable recorders, including body-worn cameras and audio/video transmitters, emit radio waves that could trigger an explosive device. Therefore, these devices should not be used where any explosive device may be present.

IDENTIFICATION AND PRESERVATION OF RECORDINGS

To assist with identifying and preserving data and recordings, members should download, tag or mark the recordings in accordance with procedure and document the existence of the recording in any related case report.

A member should transfer, tag or mark recordings when the member believes:

- a) The recording contains evidence relevant to potential criminal, civil or administrative matters.
- b) A complainant, victim or witness has requested non-disclosure.
- c) A complainant, victim or witness has not requested non-disclosure but the disclosure of the recording may endanger the person.
- d) Disclosure may be an unreasonable violation of someone's privacy.
- e) Medical or mental health information is contained.



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- f) Disclosure may compromise an under-cover officer or confidential informant.
- g) The recording or portions of the recording may be protected under the Minnesota Data Practices Act.

Any time a member reasonably believes a recorded contact may be beneficial in a non-criminal matter (e.g. a hostile contact), the member should promptly notify a supervisor of the existence of the recording.

REVIEW OF RECORDED MEDIA FILES

When preparing written reports, members should review their recordings as a resource (See the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths Policy for guidance in those cases.). However, members shall not retain personal copies of recordings. Members should not use the fact that a recording was made as a reason to write a less detailed report.

Supervisors are authorized to review relevant recordings any time they are investigating alleged misconduct or reports of meritorious conduct or whenever such recordings would be beneficial in reviewing the member's performance.

Supervisors will periodically conduct spot checks (audits) of officers Body Worn Camera footage and insure that officers are compliant with this policy.

Recorded files may also be reviewed:

- a) By a supervisor as part of internal audits and reviews as required by Minn. Statute §626.8473.
- b) Upon approval by a supervisor, by any member of the department who is participating in an official investigation, such as a personnel complaint, administrative investigation or criminal investigation.
- c) Pursuant to lawful process or by court personnel who are otherwise authorized to review evidence in a related case.
- d) By media personnel with permission of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.
- e) In compliance with the Minnesota Data Practices Act requests, if permitted or required by the Act, including pursuant of Minn. Stat. § 13.82, Subd. 15, and in accordance with the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.

All recordings should be reviewed by the Custodian of Records prior to public release (See the Records Maintenance and Release Policy). Recordings that are clearly offensive to common sensibilities should not be publicly released unless disclosure is required by law or order of the court (Minn. Stat. § 13.82, Subd. 7; Minn. Stat. § 13.825, Subd. 2).



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COORDINATOR

The Chief of Police or the authorized designee should designate a coordinator responsible for (Minn. Stat. § 626.8473; Minn. Stat. § 13.825):

- a. Establishing procedures for the security, storage and maintenance of data and recordings.
 1. The Custodian of Records shall be Beltrami County Sheriff Office.
 2. The coordinator shall work with the Custodian of Records and the member assigned to coordinate the use, access and release of protected information to ensure that procedures comply with requirements of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA) and other applicable laws (Minn. Stat. § 13.01 et seq.) (See the Protected Information and the Records Maintenance and Release policies)
 3. The coordinator should work with the Custodian of Records to identify recordings that must be retained for a specific time frame under Minnesota Law (e.g. firearm discharges, certain use of force incidents, formal complaints).
- b. Establishing procedures for accessing data and recordings.
 1. These procedures should include the process to obtain written authorization for access to non-public data by City of Blackduck members and members of other governmental entities and agencies.
- c. Establishing procedures for logging and auditing access.
- d. Establishing procedures for transferring, downloading, tagging or marking events.
- e. Establishing an inventory of portable recorders including:
 1. Total number of devices owned or maintained by the Blackduck Police Department.
 2. Daily record of the total number of deployed and used by members and, if applicable, the precinct or district in which the devices were used.
 3. Total amount of recorded audio and video data collected by the devices and maintained by the Blackduck Police Department.
- f. Preparing the biennial audit required by Minn. Stat. § 13.825 Subd. 9.
- g. Notifying the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) in a timely manner when new equipment is obtained by the Blackduck Police Department that expands the type of scope of surveillance capabilities of the department's portable recorders.
- h. Ensuring that this Portable Audio/Video Recorders Policy is posted on the City of Blackduck website.



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PROHIBITED USE OF AUDIO / VIDEO RECORDERS

Members are prohibited from using office-issued recorders and recording media for personal use and are prohibited from making personal copies of recordings created while on-duty or while acting in their official capacity.

Members are also prohibited from retaining recordings of activities of information obtained while on-duty, whether the recording was created with office-issued or personally owned recorders. Members shall not duplicate or distribute such recordings, except for authorized legitimate office business purposes. All such recordings shall be maintained at the department.

Recordings shall not be used by any member for the purpose of embarrassment, harassment or ridicule.

RETENTION OF RECORDS

All recordings shall be retained for a period consistent with the requirements of the organization's records retention schedule but in no event for a period less than 90 days.

The following retention periods apply to the following recorded video event descriptions before the videos are purged from the system whether it is the network server or evidence room.

Event Description Retention Period:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Period:</u>
1. Junk	90 days
2. Traffic Stop Warning	90 days
3. Traffic Stop Citation	90 days
4. DWI	365 days
5. Pursuit	365 days
6. Arrest	Until Case is resolved
7. Accident	90 days
8. Audio domestic	365 days
9. Homicide/Sex Assault	Forever
10. Evidence	Until Case is resolved
11. Medical	90 days
12. Statutory	6 years

In addition to the above retention periods, the following will be retained for **one year**.

1. Data that documents the use of a sufficient type or degree to require a use of force report or supervisory review including the use of force by an officer that results in substantial bodily harm.
2. Data that documents a **reportable** discharge of a firearm by an officer in the course of their duties.
3. Data documenting circumstances that have given rise to a formal complaint against an officer.

Any body worn camera recording, including related data or metadata, documenting an officer's use of deadly force shall be maintained indefinitely.



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No data including data or metadata, shall be altered, erased, or destroyed prior to the expiration of the applicable retention period.

Upon written request by a BWC and SCVC data subject, the agency shall retain a recording pertaining to that subject for an additional time period requested by the subject of up to 180 days.

The agency will notify the requestor at the time of the request that the data will then be destroyed unless a new written request is received.

RELEASE OF AUDIO / VIDEO RECORDINGS

Requests for the release of audio / video recordings shall be processed in accordance with the Records Maintenance and Release Policy. BWC video shall be shared with other agencies only for legitimate law enforcement purposes that are documented in writing at the time of the request. A copy of all written requests shall be retained on file.

ACCESS TO RECORDINGS

Except as provided in Minn. Stat. § 13.825, Subd. 2, audio / video recordings are considered private or nonpublic data.

Any person captured in a recording may have access to the recording. If the individual requests a copy of the recording and does not have the consent of other non-law enforcement individuals captured on the recording, the identity of those individuals must be blurred or obscured sufficiently to render the subject unidentifiable prior to release. The identity of on-duty peace officers may not be obscured unless their identity is protected under Minn. Stat. § 13.82, Subd. 17.

When an individual dies as a result of a use of force by a peace officer, an involved officer's law enforcement agency must allow the following individuals, upon their request, to inspect all portable recording system data, redacted no more than what is required by law, documenting the incident within five days of the request, except as otherwise provided in this clause:

1. the deceased individual's next of kin;
2. the legal representative of the deceased individual's next of kin; and
3. the other parent of the deceased individual's child.

A law enforcement agency may deny a request if the agency determines that there is a compelling reason that inspection would interfere with an active investigation. If the agency denies access, the chief law enforcement officer must provide a prompt, written denial to the individual who requested the data with a short description of the compelling reason access was denied and must provide notice that relief may be sought from the district court pursuant to MN Statute 626.8473 Section 13.82, subdivision 7.

When an individual dies as a result of a use of force by a peace officer, an involved officer's law enforcement agency shall release all portable recording system data, redacted no more than what is required by law, documenting the incident no later than 14 days after the incident, unless the chief law enforcement officer asserts in writing that the public classification would interfere with an ongoing investigation, in which case the data remain classified by MN Statute 626.8473 Section 13.82, subdivision 7.



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ACCOUNTABILITY

Any member who accesses or releases recordings without authorization may be subject to discipline. (See the Standards of Conduct and the Protected Information policies) (Minn. Stat. § 626.8473).

Any person who willfully violates the provisions of this policy or any rules adopted under this policy or whose conduct constitutes the knowing unauthorized acquisition of not public data, as defined in Minn. Statute Section 626.8473 13.055, subdivision 1, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Willful violation of this policy, including any action subject to a criminal penalty noted above, by any public employee constitutes just cause for suspension without pay or dismissal of the public employee.