



"A Message from the Inspector General: Audit of the Department of Justice Policy on Body Worn Cameras," June 2021

Hello, I'm Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today, my office released a report on the Department of Justice's policy on body worn cameras. For the past decade, the DOJ has studied, supported, and promoted the use of body worn cameras by state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies because these cameras enhance transparency and accountability, can provide important and useful information when officers are accused of wrongdoing, and often capture other relevant evidence. Nevertheless, our review found that DOJ law enforcement officers themselves largely did not use body worn cameras. Further, when we initiated our audit in June 2020, we found that the DOJ's law enforcement components were unprepared to implement body worn camera programs.

Earlier this year, my office briefed the Department's leadership on the preliminary findings of this audit. The DOJ subsequently took significant steps to move forward in developing a directive for DOJ law enforcement components to implement body worn camera programs. And in June 2021, the Deputy Attorney General issued a memorandum directing the Department's four main law enforcement components to develop body worn camera policies within 30 days.

As Inspector General, I lead a workforce that includes special agents who conduct law enforcement operations. I believe that body worn cameras are essential tools for transparency and accountability. To that end, I have hired a senior law enforcement officer to oversee our body worn camera program, and we are in the process of finalizing and implementing our body worn camera policies.

In implementing our program, we're considering the same issues that we recommend the DOJ consider, including: activation and deactivation policies, video retention policies, privacy concerns, governance related to the public release of body worn camera footage, and operational costs.

To read our report and our 3 recommendations, including our briefing paper to the Acting Attorney General, visit our website oig.justice.gov, or go to oversight.gov.

Thank you for joining me today.

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