

Rochester Police Department Body-Worn Camera Audit Results

ASSESSMENT OF BODY-WORN CAMERA POLICY COMPLIANCE
RPD OFFICE OF BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Project Summary

In a proactive effort to promote accountability for the newly implemented (early 2017) body-worn camera (BWC) initiative, the Rochester Police Department (RPD) conducted an internal audit of body-camera usage from July 28, 2017 through August 14, 2018. The goal of the audit was to gather data and with it, information regarding the officers' responses to BWC policy and the adherence thereof. The hundreds of thousands of interactions RPD has with the citizens of Rochester annually makes it impossible to verify BWC use during all encounters with the public. Also, by policy not every situation requires the activation of a BWC. Therefore, to gather the best insight for officer usage, RPD randomly sampled weekly data in which by policy, camera activations were always required. These types of interactions are traffic stops and field interviews. This yielded a sample size that permitted a meaningful audit. Also, unlike other events which require documentation of BWC use (e.g., Incident Reports, arrests, etc.), traffic stops and field interviews do not always result in a written report that supervisors can use to track BWC compliance.

The timeframe of the audit was selected in such a way that at the conclusion of the study, the sample size would be large enough to provide the calculated percentages a margin-of-error of at most +/- 2%, at 95% confidence. More detailed sampling methodology can be found at the [RPD Open Data Portal](#).

The audit was conducted using three hierarchical components based on RPD's perceived seriousness; camera activation, classification status, and report compliance. The most serious policy requirement was determined to be the camera activation, which was a check to see if the officer activated his/her camera. Again, the interactions sampled for this audit were situations in which camera activation is always required, therefore absolute compliance would result in 100%. The next component was classification status, which is an indication of properly assigning a category to the video collected for retention purposes. Again, there should be video for all of these situations, so proper classifications are expected 100% of the time. Finally, the third component of the hierarchy was report compliance. This component focused on the documentation of BWC video in reports, which is slightly different from the other components in that documentation is unique to the result of the interaction. The main difference is that while field interviews always require a report, traffic stops do not. Therefore, the traffic stops that did not require a report were not considered when calculating percentages for report compliance. Finally, the percentage for overall policy compliance was calculated using the results from these three sub-components as a gauge for overall policy adherence. Any infraction at the sub-component level resulted in an overall infraction at the policy level.

At the end of the audit timeframe RPD was able to investigate a total sample of 2,383 interactions. The results of the audit indicate that we can infer that 92.4% of all officer interactions occurring within the audit timeframe were compliant with all three policy

components (camera activation, classification status, and report compliance) as it pertains to traffic stops and field interviews. When looking at individual sub-components, we can also gather that camera activation is 96.4% compliant, classification status is 93.1% and report status is 97.3%. Since these percentages differ from 50% (which assumes the highest level of uncertainty), we were also able to re-evaluate the margins-of-error for each. A complete table of the results rounded to the nearest tenth of percent is as follows:

Audit Component	Sample size	Percentage Estimate	Margin-of-error	Interval (95% conf)
Overall Policy Compliance	2,383	92.4%	1.0%	(91.4, 93.4)
Camera Activation	2,383	96.4%	0.7%	(95.7, 97.1)
Classification Status	2,383	93.1%	1.0%	(92.1, 94.1)
Report Compliance	679*	97.3%	1.2%	(96.1, 98.5)

* Not all traffic stops require the completion of a report.

Although these results are promising, RPD understands that there are many types of interactions not captured in this audit that also are worth investigating as well. However, with limited resources and an understanding of the complexity of the policy, a process of capturing random samples of those types of situations is not currently feasible at this scale. RPD will continue to work on expanding this audit to include as much as possible in the future.