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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
CONTACT: TANNYR WATKINS
(202) 532-3923; Tannyr.M.Watkins@ojp.usdoj.gov

BODY-WORN CAMERAS ACQUIRED BY NEARLY HALF OF STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

WASHINGTON — Nearly half of state and local law enforcement agencies in the United States had acquired body-worn cameras by 2016 (BWCs), the Bureau of Justice Statistics announced today.

Findings are from the first Body-Worn Camera Supplement to the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics survey, which found that 47 percent of the 15,328 general-purpose state and local law enforcement agencies had acquired BWCs. In comparison, 69 percent had dashboard cameras and 38 percent had personal audio recorders.

Local police departments and sheriffs' offices reported these top reasons for acquiring BWCs: Improve officer safety, improve evidence quality, reduce civilian complaints, and reduce agency liability. Among agencies that had acquired BWCs, 60 percent of local police departments and 49 percent of sheriffs' offices had fully deployed their BWCs in 2016.

Among the agencies that had acquired BWCs, 86 percent had a formal BWC policy or one in draft form. About 84 percent of these policies included guidelines on what specific events to record, and 87 percent included guidelines on the transfer, storage and disposal of video recordings.

Among agencies with a policy that included what events to record, 93 percent required officers with BWCs to record traffic stops. About 85 percent required officers to record officer-initiated citizen contacts, and the same percentage required officers to record the execution of arrest or search warrants. In addition, 50 percent required officers with BWCs to record the transporting of offenders.

An estimated 88 percent of law enforcement agencies that had BWCs in service allowed the chief executive (such as the sheriff, police chief or commissioner) to have direct access to BWC video recordings without having to file a formal request. About 60 percent of agencies allowed the officer who made a recording to have direct access to the footage, and 20 percent allowed district attorneys to have direct access.

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Among agencies that had not acquired BWCs, the primary reason given was costs. About 77 percent of agencies cited video storage/disposal costs, 74 percent cited hardware costs, and 73 percent cited ongoing maintenance/support costs. Nearly 40 percent of law enforcement agencies without BWCs stated they had not acquired BWCs due to privacy concerns.

The report, [*Body-Worn Cameras in Law Enforcement Agencies, 2016* \(NCJ 251775\)](#), was written by BJS statistician Shelley S. Hyland., Ph.D. The report, related documents and additional information about BJS’s statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at www.bjs.gov.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating reliable statistics on crime and criminal justice in the United States. Jeffrey H. Anderson is the director.

The Office of Justice Programs, led by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt M. Dummermuth, provides federal leadership in developing the nation’s capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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