

**RHODE ISLAND GOVERNMENT REGISTER
PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING**

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Title of Rule: Rules and Regulations Governing Statewide Body-Worn Grant Program

Rule Identifier: 270-RICR-60-00-1

Rulemaking Action: Proposed Adoption

Important Dates:

Date of Public Notice: January 13, 2022

End of Public Comment: February 12, 2022

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End of Public Comment: February 12, 2022

Rulemaking Authority:

R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-161

Summary of Rulemaking Action:

These rules and regulations (the "Rules") are promulgated to set forth the principles, policies, and practices of the Rhode Island Department of Public Safety (the "Department") in implementing and administering R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-161, the Statewide Body-Worn Camera Program (the "Program").

Additional Information and Public Comments:

All interested parties are invited to request additional information or submit written or oral comments concerning the proposed adoption until February 12, 2022 by contacting the appropriate party at the address listed below:

Major Laurie Ludovici
Department of Public Safety
311 Danielson Pike
North Scituate, RI 02857
rulesregs@risp.gov

In accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-35-2.8, an oral hearing will be granted if requested by twenty-five (25) persons, by a governmental agency or by an association having at least twenty-five (25) members. A request for an oral hearing must be made within ten (10) days of the publication of this notice.

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Regulatory Analysis Summary and Supporting Documentation:

The regulation and the body-worn camera grant program it enables will provide significant societal benefits to the State of Rhode Island and its local communities. Body-worn cameras are key accountability and law enforcement tools. They are an unbiased witness to law enforcement actions, building community trust while providing prosecutors with critical evidence. Moreover, recent research has shown that they are effective: wearing body-worn cameras can reduce the use of force by police by about 10% and complaints against police officers by 17% (1). Importantly, this growing body of research shows that the benefit-cost ratio of body-worn cameras may be as high as 5:1 (dollars), with as much as one-quarter of the estimated benefits accruing to government budgets directly through averted uses of force, reduced litigation costs, and other attendant benefits.

The monetary benefits derived from body-worn camera adoption by state and local law enforcement are traceable to averted fatal police uses of force, averted non-fatal uses of force, and a reduction in citizen complaints to the police. Williams et al. value a statistical life at \$10.6 million, not significantly different from Rhode Island's \$9.1 million measure, and also value the fiscal harms from non-fatal force incidents at \$109,000. Because their research demonstrates that the use and operation of the cameras results in a reduction in the use of fatal and non-fatal force by police, it follows that there is a positive economic benefit attributable to the use of the cameras and thus the program and regulation that enable their purchase. It is, however, more difficult to quantify the specific Rhode Island benefits because of the elective nature of the grant program. All, some, or none of Rhode Island's eligible state and local law enforcement agencies may choose to seek grant funding and procure body-worn cameras. That being said, Williams et al. find the benefits of adopting body-worn cameras per 100,000 in a jurisdiction equal to approximately \$1.9 million.

Researchers have also shown that officers with body-worn cameras have had fewer complaints lodged against them relative to officers without body-worn cameras, and had a higher number of citizen complaints resolved in their favor (2). A 2017 study funded by the U.S. Department of Justice analyzed body-worn camera adoption by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and estimated, for instance, a decrease of 25 complaints per 100 body-worn camera users as well as a reduced cost to investigate each complaint (because of the available body-worn camera evidence), and a reduced amount of time it takes to resolve a complaint when video evidence is available (3). This study found that, notwithstanding body-worn camera costs for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department of between \$828 and \$1,097 per user per year, the cameras generated net annual savings of between \$2,909 and \$3,178 per user. These savings are largely attributable to the significantly faster investigation of complaints.

There is also mounting evidence that the use of body-worn cameras can positively impact officer behavior and community perceptions of policy. In addition to decreasing the likelihood for use of force, studies have shown that officers wearing body-worn cameras are less likely to have higher numbers of self-initiated contacts with community residents (4). Research has also demonstrated that body-worn cameras can improve community perceptions of police (5). These perception benefits, while often difficult to quantify, are important and only further cement the net benefit of body-worn cameras when combined with the monetary benefits associated with averting uses of force and complaints.

Because the regulation creates rules for an elective program administered by the Department of Public Safety, its existence does not create or impose any costs or burdens for eligible program participants—state and local law enforcement agencies—or others in Rhode Island. If and when state and local law enforcement agencies choose to participate in the elective grant program, it can only be assumed that they are doing so because they believe the benefits provided by the program (grant funds to be used for the adoption of body-worn camera solutions) outweigh any costs to their local governments or agencies—otherwise the leaders of these local governments and agencies would not choose to participate in the program. The only quantifiable costs associated with the regulation will be borne by the Department of Public Safety, which will fund these costs and expenses using funds appropriated for this purpose by the General Assembly.

(1) Williams, Morgan C., Nathan Weil, Elizabeth Rasich, Jens Ludwig, Hye Chang and Sophia Egrari. 2021.

"Body-Worn Cameras in Policing: Benefits and Costs." University of Chicago Crime Lab.

(https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/fa10fa8358f9a374192f2360e0cf620dd4fcb523/store/5959e869f443a4b4feb02bb33edcc63e12308bcb279b0b3d08d673c23a27/Williams+et+al_Body-Worn+Cameras_03_25.pdf)

[urbanlabs.uchicago.edu])

(2) Katz, Charles, David Choate, Justin Ready, and Lidia Nuno. 2015. "Evaluating the Impact of Officer Worn Body Cameras in the Phoenix Police Department" (Arizona State University).

(3) Anthony Braga, James Coldren, William Sousa, Denise Rodriguez, and Omer Alper. 2017 "The Benefits of Body-Worn Cameras: New Findings from a Randomized Controlled Trial at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

(4) Barak Ariel, William A. Farrar, and Alex Sutherland. 2015. "The Effect of Police Body-Worn Cameras on Use of Force and Citizens' Complaints against the Police: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 31 no. 3: 509-535; Justin T. Ready and Jacob T.N. Young. 2015. "The Impact of On-Officer Video Cameras on Police-Citizen Contacts" *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 11 no. 3: 445-458.

(5) Crow, Matthew S., Jamie A. Snyder, Vaughn J. Crichlow, John Ortiz Smykla, 2017. "Community Perceptions of Police Body-Worn Cameras: The Impact of Views on Fairness, Fear, Performance, and Privacy," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 1-22.

For full regulatory analysis or supporting documentation contact the agency staffperson listed above.