**An Garda Síochána – Body Worn Cameras Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**What is a Body Worn Camera?**
Body Worn Camera (BWC) refers to a small, lightweight camera, which is visibly worn by a Garda.

The BWC is most often secured on a Garda member’s chest facing forward.

The BWC records footage to its own internal encrypted storage, which is uploaded when the Garda docks the BWC in the station. Body Worn Camera footage is uploaded at end of shift so it can be used as evidence in court or is deleted after an agreed time period if it's not required as evidence.

**When will Body Worn Cameras be in use by An Garda Síochána?**

Today is the start of a public procurement process for BWCs.

BWCs will be in public use in a live operational pilot in mid-2024.

A full phased rollout of BWCs will begin on completion of the live pilot in 2024, commencing incrementally in 2025 before completion in 2026.

**Will An Garda Síochána have a policy governing the use of body cameras?**

An Garda Síochána will develop and publish detailed public policy and provide internal guidance procedures for the use of BWCs following consultation and engagement with all relevant parties before BWCs are used in public.

**When will the BWC be switched on?**An Garda Síochána’s public policy will clearly set out the operating parameters for Gardaí and inform the public.

The BWC can be switched on and off by a Garda to record both audio and video footage.

Gardaí will normally activate their cameras at start of an incident, and will continue to record until it's no longer 'proportionate or necessary' or another system takes over, e.g. CCTV within a Garda station. Gardaí will use the cameras to:

* provide evidence in the investigation of an offence or suspected offence
* provide transparency, e.g. during a traffic stop or when force is necessary
* as an aide-memoire for the report of an encounter or incident

**Is the BWC on at all times, recording everything?**No, it is not intended that the Gardaí will be recording for the full length of their work shift, the BWC is for use when Gardaí are responding to an incident, or using their Garda powers. The BWC use is incident specific; unless a specific operation dictates it is used, officers will not be recording as part of normal patrolling.

**How will I know if the BWC is recording?**The BWC will have a visible indicator, the exact indicator depending on the final type of BWC procured.

**When will the BWC be turned off?**
The BWC will be turned off; once the Garda has completed the incident they have been dispatched to.

**What are the perceived benefits of the BWC?**

* improve safety for Gardaí
* reduce complaints of Garda misconduct
* save time in court preparation and appearances
* lower costs for investigations and court appearances
* improve ability to collect evidence for trial
* enhance accountability
* reduce challenges around arrests

**Are there places where Gardaí cannot use Body Worn Cameras?**There are times when members will be sensitive to a situation and can use discretion regarding their decision to activate the BWC while investigating certain incidents.

**Does a Garda have to stop recording if I ask him/her to?**No. A Garda is not required to stop recording upon request.

**Do body cameras record both audio and video?**Yes.

**How long will video be kept?**Video will be kept in accordance with policy. Generally this is for a minimum period of 31 days.

Video deemed as evidential will be maintained longer depending on the type of incident in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, Law Enforcement Directive and data retention laws outlined in the Data Protection Act 2018.

**What make and model of BWC will An Garda Síochána use?**
There is no decision made on any make or model at this time. An Garda Síochána has begun a public procurement process with the publication of a Request for Information (RFI), the initial part of the procurement, published today (12/9/2023) on the EU Tenders Website.

**Can anyone in An Garda Síochána delete a video?**
No. All of the video will be managed by the Digital Evidence Management System. Videos will be scheduled for deletion though an automated retention system after 31 days if it is non-evidentiary video. System deletions of videos will only be done after a criminal case is adjudicated in a court of law and the standard retention periods required for appeals are met.

**What is a Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS)?**DEMS stands for Digital Evidence Management System
This is an ICT software solution that will enable An Garda Síochána to collect, store, manage and analyse digital evidence including BWC footage and CCTV.

The DEMS typically includes a public portal to facilitate publically uploaded dash-cam footage.

**What is the policy basis for introduction of BWC/ DEMS?**

Recommendation 12 of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI).In their report [*The Future of Policing in Ireland*](http://policereform.ie/en/POLREF/The%20Future%20of%20Policing%20in%20Ireland%28web%29.pdf/Files/The%20Future%20of%20Policing%20in%20Ireland%28web%29.pdf)*,* CoFPIrecommends that:

*“An Garda Síochána should develop a plan to deploy body worn cameras. There is a significant amount of experience in other jurisdictions which could be tapped for best practice. Modern policing organisations around the world have found that body cameras can help to improve front line capability with the accurate recording of incidents, expedite analysis, enhance situational awareness, and sometimes protect police from harm.”*

(Chapter 21 Digital Innovation and Information Management; Recommendation 12 - page 79).

Action 29 Irelands Government Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2023 provides that An Garda Síochána “Explore the potential of an online portal for road users to upload footage of road traffic offences which could assist in prosecution.”

An Garda Síochána, on a daily basis, legally obtain cctv footage from private premises citizens across the country in support of criminal investigations.

An Garda Síochána, on a near daily basis, make appeals to the public for digital imagery in support of criminal investigations.

**What is the legal basis for the introduction of BWC?**

The Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) Bill 2022, currently before Seanad Éireann and the proposed Garda Síochána (Digital Management and Facial Recognition Technology) Bill 2023 will form the legal basis for the introduction of BWC and processing of any data captured.

**Are BWC GDPR compliant?**

The introduction of BWCs will be in compliance with legislation and data captured will be stored and processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations, Law Enforcement Directive and Data retention laws outlined in the Data Protection Act 2018.

**Has a Data Impact Protection Assessment been carried out?**

A Data Protection Impact Assessment will be carried out prior to the introduction of BWCs.

**Will images from An Garda Síochána BWC be made available to the public, as often happens in other jurisdictions?**

An Garda Síochána will develop and publish detailed public policy for the use of BWCs following engagement with all relevant parties before BWCs are used in public.

**What is the budget for BWCs?**

The introduction of BWCs is a large-scale organisation-wide enterprise which will have a multi-million organisation cost over a 5 year procurement process. As this is the start of the public procurement process, it would be commercially inappropriate to put a specific budget on the project at this time.

An Garda Síochána has successfully delivered on similar organisation-wide enterprise projects in recent years including Active Mobility (introduction of approx. 14,000 mobility devices across the organisation) and GardaSAFE.

**Will additional training be required for the introduction of BWCs?**

Training will be provided for operational members in the introduction of BWCs.

Training will also be provided for support staff in the DEMS and processing of any data.

**Will a public information campaign be in place prior to the introduction of BWC?**

An Garda Síochána will provide public information prior to the start of any use of BWCs.

**Does An Garda Síochána have plans to use facial recognition technology with the video from the body cameras?**The RFI and the subsequent procurement processes will be run under the legislative basis of the Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) Bill 2022 which does not include a provision for the use of Facial Recognition Technology (FRT). However, Government policy is to provide a legal basis for the retrospective use of FRT in defined circumstances with appropriate safeguards as part of separate legislation; currently envisaged as the Garda Síochána (Digital Management and Facial Recognition Technology) Bill 2023.

An Garda Síochána has no plans to use live facial recognition on BWCs. While BWC footage is expected to be relatively small in volume and not a significant source for retrospective FRT, other CCTV evidence collected and stored on DEMS may be. All analysis tools (AI or FRT) must operate on a decision support basis only; Garda policy prevents autonomous machine decision-making where this could adversely impact a member of the public.