
HOUSE BILL 2644

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Representatives Simmons, Hill, and Pollet

Read first time 01/23/26. Referred to Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

1 AN ACT Relating to the use of body worn cameras by law
2 enforcement officers; amending RCW 10.109.010, 10.109.020, and
3 10.109.030; adding new sections to chapter 43.101 RCW; adding a new
4 chapter to Title 10 RCW; providing an effective date; and providing
5 an expiration date.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** This act may be known and cited as the law
8 enforcement body worn camera act.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The legislature finds that public trust in
10 law enforcement is strengthened by transparency and accountability,
11 and that body worn cameras provide an objective record of law
12 enforcement interactions, protect both officers and the public, and
13 aid in accurate investigations and judicial proceedings.

14 Therefore, the legislature intends to establish a uniform
15 statewide standard requiring all law enforcement officers to activate
16 their body worn cameras during all law enforcement encounters and
17 responses to incidents, ensuring continuous and reliable recordings
18 of public interactions.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The definitions in this section apply
2 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
3 otherwise.

4 (1) "Body worn camera" means a video and sound recording device
5 attached to the uniform or eyewear of a law enforcement officer that
6 records the officer's interactions and activities while in the course
7 of the officer's official duties.

8 (2) "Incident" means any situation where a law enforcement
9 officer is dispatched, responds, or becomes involved, including but
10 not limited to enforcement actions, investigations, traffic stops,
11 calls for service, detentions, and arrests.

12 (3) "Law enforcement agency" means a general authority Washington
13 law enforcement agency as defined in RCW 10.93.020.

14 (4) "Law enforcement officer" means a general authority
15 Washington peace officer as defined in RCW 10.93.020.

16 (5) "Public interaction" means any contact between a law
17 enforcement officer and a member of the public, whether initiated by
18 the officer or the individual.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) Beginning July 1, 2027, each law
20 enforcement officer in the state must be equipped with and activate a
21 body worn camera prior to arriving at the scene of an incident, or
22 prior to initiating an interaction with a member of the public,
23 whichever occurs first.

24 (2) Except as provided in subsection (3) of this section, the
25 body worn camera must remain activated until the incident or
26 interaction has fully concluded, including by remaining activated
27 throughout any transportation of detainees or suspects.

28 (3) (a) Deactivating the body worn camera is authorized only under
29 the following circumstances:

30 (i) Interactions involving a confidential informant or undercover
31 officer where recording the interaction may reveal the informant or
32 officer's identity; or

33 (ii) During personal breaks, administrative discussions, or when
34 the law enforcement officer is not engaged in law enforcement
35 activity.

36 (b) If the body worn camera is deactivated for any reason under
37 (a) of this subsection, the law enforcement officer must verbally
38 record the justification prior to deactivation, and reactivate the

1 body worn camera immediately upon reengagement in any law enforcement
2 activity.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) Beginning July 1, 2027, each law
4 enforcement agency in the state must store the body worn camera
5 recordings of the agency's officers using secure digital evidence
6 systems compliant with all applicable data security standards under
7 state law.

8 (2)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, each body
9 worn camera recording must be retained for a minimum of 90 days from
10 the date of the recording.

11 (b) Body worn camera recordings must be retained for a minimum of
12 three years from the date of the recording in cases involving any of
13 the following:

14 (i) Use of force by a law enforcement officer;

15 (ii) An arrest or detention; or

16 (iii) A complaint or investigation involving a law enforcement
17 officer's conduct.

18 (3) Unauthorized access, alteration, or deletion of body worn
19 camera recordings is prohibited and subject to disciplinary action by
20 the employing law enforcement agency, in addition to any other
21 penalties provided under state law.

22 (4) Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting any
23 law enforcement agency from retaining body worn camera recordings for
24 a longer period than the minimum requirements described in subsection
25 (2) of this section.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** By July 1, 2027, each law enforcement
27 agency in the state must establish or update its policies regarding
28 the use of body worn cameras to ensure compliance with the provisions
29 of this chapter. The policies must, at a minimum, address the
30 following:

31 (1) When a body worn camera must be activated and deactivated,
32 and when a law enforcement officer has the discretion to activate and
33 deactivate the body worn camera;

34 (2) How a law enforcement officer is to respond to circumstances
35 when it would be reasonably anticipated that a person may be
36 unwilling or less willing to communicate with an officer who is
37 recording the communication with a body worn camera;

1 (3) How a law enforcement officer will document when and why a
2 body worn camera was deactivated prior to the conclusion of an
3 interaction with a member of the public while conducting official law
4 enforcement duties;

5 (4) How, and under what circumstances, a law enforcement officer
6 is to inform a member of the public that he or she is being recorded,
7 including in situations where the person is a non-English speaker or
8 has limited English proficiency, or where the person is deaf or hard
9 of hearing;

10 (5) What disciplinary actions, up to and including suspension of
11 termination, a law enforcement officer will be subject to if the
12 officer violates a provision of this chapter or agency policy;

13 (6) How law enforcement officers are to be trained on body worn
14 camera usage and how frequently the training is to be reviewed or
15 renewed; and

16 (7) Retention guidelines and security rules to protect data
17 collected and stored from body worn cameras.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A person who is the subject of an incident
19 or public interaction captured by a body worn camera may request a
20 copy of the relevant recording at no cost, except as prohibited under
21 RCW 42.56.240 or any other applicable state law.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** The state of Washington fully occupies and
23 preempts the entire field of requiring the use of body worn cameras
24 by general authority Washington peace officers. Cities, towns, and
25 counties or other municipalities may enact only those laws and
26 ordinances relating to the use of body worn cameras by general
27 authority Washington peace officers that are consistent with this
28 chapter. Local laws and ordinances that are inconsistent with the
29 requirements of state law shall not be enacted and are preempted and
30 repealed, regardless of the nature of the code, charter, or home rule
31 status of the city, town, county, or municipality.

32 **Sec. 9.** RCW 10.109.010 and 2018 c 285 s 2 are each amended to
33 read as follows:

34 (1) A limited authority Washington law enforcement agency or
35 corrections agency that deploys body worn cameras must establish
36 policies regarding the use of the cameras. The policies must, at a
37 minimum, address:

1 (a) When a body worn camera must be activated and deactivated,
2 and when a law enforcement or corrections officer has the discretion
3 to activate and deactivate the body worn camera;

4 (b) How a law enforcement or corrections officer is to respond to
5 circumstances when it would be reasonably anticipated that a person
6 may be unwilling or less willing to communicate with an officer who
7 is recording the communication with a body worn camera;

8 (c) How a law enforcement or corrections officer will document
9 when and why a body worn camera was deactivated prior to the
10 conclusion of an interaction with a member of the public while
11 conducting official law enforcement or corrections business;

12 (d) How, and under what circumstances, a law enforcement or
13 corrections officer is to inform a member of the public that he or
14 she is being recorded, including in situations where the person is a
15 non-English speaker or has limited English proficiency, or where the
16 person is deaf or hard of hearing;

17 (e) How officers are to be trained on body worn camera usage and
18 how frequently the training is to be reviewed or renewed; and

19 (f) Security rules to protect data collected and stored from body
20 worn cameras.

21 (2) A limited authority Washington law enforcement agency or
22 corrections agency that deploys body worn cameras before ((June 9,
23 2016)) the effective date of this section, must establish the
24 policies within ((one hundred twenty)) 120 days of ((June 9, 2016))
25 the effective date of this section. A limited authority Washington
26 law enforcement agency or corrections agency that deploys body worn
27 cameras on or after ((June 9, 2016)) the effective date of this
28 section, must establish the policies before deploying body worn
29 cameras.

30 **Sec. 10.** RCW 10.109.020 and 2016 c 163 s 6 are each amended to
31 read as follows:

32 For a city or town that is not deploying body worn cameras on
33 ((June 9, 2016)) the effective date of this section, a legislative
34 authority of a city or town is strongly encouraged to adopt an
35 ordinance or resolution authorizing the use of body worn cameras
36 prior to their use by a limited authority Washington law enforcement
37 agency or a corrections agency. Any ordinance or resolution
38 authorizing the use of body worn cameras should identify a community

1 involvement process for providing input into the development of
2 operational policies governing the use of body worn cameras.

3 **Sec. 11.** RCW 10.109.030 and 2018 c 285 s 3 are each amended to
4 read as follows:

5 For state and local agencies, a body worn camera may only be used
6 by officers employed by a general authority Washington law
7 enforcement agency as defined in RCW 10.93.020, (~~any officer~~
8 ~~employed by the department of corrections~~) officers employed by a
9 limited authority Washington law enforcement agency as defined in RCW
10 10.93.020, and personnel for jails as defined in RCW 70.48.020 and
11 detention facilities as defined in RCW 13.40.020. The use of body
12 worn cameras by officers employed by a general authority Washington
13 law enforcement agency is subject to the requirements of sections 1
14 through 8 of this act.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** A new section is added to chapter 43.101
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
18 specific purpose, the commission shall distribute funding to local
19 law enforcement agencies to purchase and maintain body worn camera
20 equipment and safe and secure data storage systems.

21 (2) Beginning July 1, 2027, and every year thereafter, the
22 commission shall submit a report to the fiscal committees of the
23 legislature detailing the name of each law enforcement agency that
24 received funding, and the amount of funding distributed to each
25 agency.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** A new section is added to chapter 43.101
27 RCW to read as follows:

28 (1) The commission shall monitor law enforcement agency
29 compliance with the provisions of sections 4 through 6 of this act
30 and, by December 1, 2027, submit a report to the appropriate
31 committees of the legislature detailing whether each local law
32 enforcement agency in the state has achieved compliance, including
33 whether each agency has:

34 (a) Fully equipped its law enforcement officers with body worn
35 cameras;

36 (b) Implemented a system to safely and securely store collected
37 recording; and

1 (c) Established or updated its body worn camera policies as
2 described under section 6 of this act.

3 (2) This section expires July 1, 2028.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** Sections 1 through 8 of this act
5 constitute a new chapter in Title 10 RCW.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 15.** Sections 4 through 6 and 8 through 11 of
7 this act takes effect July 1, 2027.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 16.** If any provision of this act or its
9 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the
10 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other
11 persons or circumstances is not affected.

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