

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 748
Judiciary

(Delegate Schindler, *et al.*)

Municipalities - Enforcement Officers - Body-Worn Cameras

This bill authorizes a municipality to adopt an ordinance or a resolution authorizing an official who is authorized to act as an enforcement officer to use a body-worn camera (BWC) during the course of the official's duties. A municipality that adopts such an ordinance or resolution must develop and publish a policy for the issuance and use of a BWC by an enforcement officer that addresses specified items.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill only affects local government operations.

Local Effect: No direct effect. Authorizing a municipality to adopt an ordinance or resolution that authorizes the use of BWCs by specified officials does not directly affect local finances. However, to the extent a municipality chooses to adopt such an ordinance or resolution as a result of the bill, local expenditures may increase to develop and publish a policy for the issuance and use of BWCs and to obtain, implement, and use BWCs in a manner consistent with that policy. The extent to which municipalities that already use BWCs may be affected by the bill's provisions is unknown.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The policy developed and published by a municipality must address:

- the testing of BWCs to ensure adequate functioning;
- the procedure for an enforcement officer to follow if the BWC fails to operate properly at the beginning of or during the enforcement officer's shift;

- when recording is mandatory, prohibited, and discretionary;
- when recording may require consent of a subject being recorded;
- when a recording may be ended;
- providing notice of recording;
- access to and confidentiality of recordings;
- the secure storage of data from a BWC;
- review and use of recordings;
- retention of recordings;
- dissemination and release of recordings;
- consequences for violations of the municipality's BWC policy;
- notification requirements when another individual becomes a party to the communication following the initial notification;
- specific protections for individuals when there is an expectation of privacy in private or public places; and
- any additional issues determined to be relevant in the implementation and use of BWCs by enforcement officers.

Current Law: Chapter 60 of 2021 requires the Department of State Police, the Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Howard County Police Department, and the Harford County Sheriff's Office to require the use of a BWC by each law enforcement officer employed by the law enforcement agency who regularly interacts with members of the public as part of the law enforcement officer's official duties, subject to the agency's policy on the use of BWCs. By July 1, 2025, a law enforcement agency of a county not mentioned above must meet these same requirements.

A BWC that possesses the requisite technological capability must automatically record and save at least 60 seconds of video footage immediately prior to the officer activating the record button on the device.

A law enforcement agency subject to BWC requirements must develop and maintain a written policy consistent with the policy published by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission for the use of BWCs. The policy must specify which law enforcement officers employed by the law enforcement agency are required to use BWCs. A law enforcement agency may not negate or alter any of the requirements or policies established in accordance with specified BWC-related provisions through collective bargaining.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): City of Laurel; Maryland Municipal League; Town of La Plata; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Legislative Services

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km/lgc

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