

NAACP Position on Police Body Worn Cameras (BWC)
(guidelines from 2015-2016 documents)

1) BWCs can be useful tools in ensuring transparency in law enforcement.

2) Police departments need to develop clear operational guidelines for recording, retention and access of video footage, and they should be held accountable for enforcing these guidelines and respecting the civil rights of community members.

a) When entering people's homes, residents should have the option of having the cameras turned off.

b) The interest in privacy should not be used to hide video footage from the public. Upon request, anyone who is filmed and files a complaint, criminal defendants, and next-of-kin to those whose death is related to events captured on video, should have access.

c) When releasing video to the public, privacy measures such as redaction of footage should be considered.

d) Officers should be prohibited from viewing footage before filing their reports so they do not conform their reports to the video rather than to their own recollections.

3) BWCs are no substitute for broader reforms of policing practices, and without carefully crafted safeguards, there is risk that they could be used to increase police surveillance of communities of color in ways that exacerbate current injustices and disparities in law enforcement.