

WEARABLE VIDEO CAMERAS POLICY



PARKING SERVICES ANIMAL SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes instructions for the implementation, carriage and use of wearable video cameras by Council Officers while they are on duty. The wearing of video cameras is intended to:

- Minimise the risk of personal harm to staff; and
- Minimise the chance of harm to a member of the public; and
- Assist staff in the lawful discharge of their functions and duties.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY ASPECTS

Hutt City Council must ensure it meets its obligation under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 in respect of ensuring the safety of our staff.

Examples of where officers are exposed to hazards include:

1. Parking Wardens have increasingly become the target of verbal abuse, threatening behaviour and physical assaults.
2. Animal Services staff are regularly required to enter onto land and premises to execute their powers under the Dog Control Act 1996. Often this means interacting with people present on the land or in premises and can involve officers coming into contact with dangerous people or situations.

In both of the above examples it is not possible to eliminate or isolate the risk of personal harm during the course of normal work activities. Hutt City Council is legally obliged to take all practicable steps to minimise the risk to its employees.

The experience of other regulatory agencies indicates that wearing video cameras has a direct effect on the attitude and demeanour of those members of the public engaging with an on duty Council officer. Hutt City Council believes the introduction of wearable video cameras will be an effective way of minimising personal harm to parking wardens and animal services officers and will avoid the need to move to other means of self-defence for officers such as physical contact or the carriage and use of other personal protection equipment.

Hutt City Council prefers the implementation of wearable video cameras over implementation of other more aggressive means of protection. The implementation of wearable video cameras is:

- a progressive step to improve officer safety in the current environment;
- complements the existing radio telephone and Global Positioning Systems already deployed by officers.

The implementation of wearable video cameras provides three key opportunities to improve safety for parking services and animal services officers. They will:

- Provide vital information about the incidence, nature and severity of verbal abuse, threatening behaviour and physical assaults towards officers. This will provide statistical information to inform what training techniques can be focused on to de-escalate situations;
- Encourage members of the public to modify their behaviour toward Council officers because they will be aware that their behaviour is being recorded; and
- Provide a record of events where such behaviour needs to be referred to the Police.

3. ADVISING THE COMMUNITY

Hutt City Council will advise the community of the introduction of wearable video cameras in a number of ways:

- Initially, via local media. This advice will include the reasons why Council has taken the step of ensuring its parking and animal services officers wear such devices and the conditions under which the information can/will be used;
- Officers using the wearable video cameras will also wear a label above or below the camera advising that a camera is being worn and may record events and dialogue. The detachable label will be in the form of an ID tag and identify the device and the Agency details.
- Verbal advice by the officer wearing the device. At any time when the device is operated, the officer must advise the individual being videotaped, as soon as practicable.

4. PRIVACY

The use and storage of electronic recordings will be managed to ensure the information is secure and may not be used in a way that may infringe any privacy principles, as outlined in the Privacy Act 1993 Part 2 (Information Privacy Principles), and in particular the following principles:

- Principle 5 - storage and security of personal information;
- Principle 6 - access to personal information;
- Principle 9 - agency not to keep personal information for longer than necessary;
- Principle 10 - limits on use of personal information; and
- Principle 11 - limits on disclosure of personal information.

Where there is no conflict with this Policy, the use and storage of electronic recordings should also comply with Council's Privacy Act Policy 2014.

5. CONDITIONS FOR USE

The conditions of use are:

- The wearable video cameras (device) will only be carried and operated by Council Officers who have been trained in their use;
- The device should be worn in conjunction with a Council uniform (if applicable);
- The device must not be used for any purpose other than a purpose authorised by this Policy.

6. STORAGE OF IMAGES

The information will be stored in accordance with the following criteria:

- Recorded footage will only be stored if it has been collected in accordance with a purpose authorised by this Policy;

- Footage will be stored on systems which have access limited to a relevant Manager and staff authorised by that Manager. Approval of that Manager or an authorised person is required for any other person to access that system;
- Footage and images will only be viewed by authorised staff in accordance with this Policy;
- Each time the system is accessed it will be recorded in a log;
- Footage will be held for no longer than necessary depending on the purpose for which the information is stored. Decisions regarding the retention of material will be made within 48 hours of the information being collected. Council will meet its obligations for retention and disposal of images under the ALGIM Retention and Disposal Schedule. Formal approval for disposal of records will be based on the direction of the Chief Archivist, Archives NZ;
- Some recordings and images may be retained for the purposes of resolving incidents, to assist in any legal proceedings or for training. Images of people not connected to the event will be blurred to avoid possible identification of that individual. This will be the responsibility of those personnel authorised to view the recorded footage.

7. RELEASE OF IMAGES

- If, in the course of any enquiry conducted by the Police, a formal request is made for any images relevant to that enquiry, the image/s will be released unaltered in response to that request with the consent of the Privacy Officer.
- The Privacy Officer must be informed of any request for release of footage and must check the footage before allowing the release.
- Individuals wishing to view footage may request to do so. This will be treated as a privacy or official information request.
- Footage of individuals not relevant to a request will be blurred or otherwise kept private if the software permits this. If this is not possible, a request may be declined if the Privacy Act 1993 allows this.

8. DISCIPLINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Failure to adhere to the above rules related to:

- the conditions of use;
- the storage of images; or
- the release of images

Will be a breach of this Policy, may be a breach of the Privacy Act 1993 and/or a breach of Hutt City Council's Code of Conduct and Employer Obligations in respect of "performance of duties" and may result in disciplinary action.

9. REVIEW OF THE USE OF WEARABLE VIDEO CAMERAS

The use of wearable video cameras will be reviewed every two years.