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ICE NEWSROOM

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ICE announces updated policy for body-worn cameras

WASHINGTON — Consistent with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) first Department-wide policy on Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs), and as required by the Executive Order on Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced today updated guidance for its law enforcement personnel, providing standards for the use of body worn cameras. The policy calls for the use of BWCs in all aspects of ICE enforcement activities conducted by ICE personnel in furtherance of the ICE mission, excluding certain investigative activities. ICE is working to secure resources required to ensure full implementation of the new policy.

“Our ability to uphold our global mission rests heavily on public trust, which is built through accountability, effectiveness, and transparency in our law enforcement tactics,” said Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director Patrick J. Lechleitner. “Today’s announcement is designed to advance these core values. Requiring the use of body-worn cameras by our law enforcement personnel is important to bringing our workforce to the forefront of innovation, while building trust and confidence in our dedicated law enforcement professionals.”

Examples of activities covered by the policy include at-large arrests, including searches incident to arrest; brief investigatory detentions, including frisks conducted during brief investigatory detentions; executing and attempting to execute, pre-planned criminal and administrative arrest warrants and in-person issuance of subpoenas; executing and attempting to execute a search or seizure warrant or order; execution of a Removal Order; deploying to protect Federal Government facilities; responding to public, unlawful/violent disturbances at ICE facilities; and interactions with members of the public while conducting the above-listed activities in the field; and when responding to emergencies. Body worn cameras will not be used for the sole purpose of recording individuals engaged in First Amendment activity.

Although this policy establishes requirements for the use of BWCs, ICE currently does not have the resources to issue cameras to all ICE law enforcement personnel. ICE will begin deploying BWCs that have been procured to date to Enforcement and Removal Office (ERO) officers and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) investigators in select locations in the coming months. Once personnel are issued BWCs, they will be subject to the policy.

The policy was largely developed through DHS’s Law Enforcement Coordination Council, a forum that allows the Department’s nine law enforcement agencies and offices to collaborate on law enforcement issues, with the input of stakeholders across the Department. This included subject matter experts from both the operational law enforcement agencies and DHS headquarters offices such as the Offices of Strategy, Policy, and Plans; Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; General Counsel; and Privacy.

ICE first announced a Body Worn Camera Pilot Program in December 2021 where ICE law enforcement officers tested the use of body worn cameras for pre-planned law enforcement operations. The DHS-wide policy builds on the pilot’s, testing, and phased rollouts at component agencies over the last two years.