Using Records Retention Schedules: How Long Do Police Body Cam Recordings Need to Be Kept?

**Purpose**: Provide guidance to law enforcement agencies on how long recordings from police body cameras need to be retained.

The minimum retention periods for recordings from police body cameras are listed in the *Law Enforcement Records Retention Schedule*:

### Incident Identified – Until Matter Resolved and Exhaustion of Appeals Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER (DAN)</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS</th>
<th>RETENTION AND DISPOSITION ACTION</th>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LE09-01-08 Rev. 3</td>
<td>Recordings from Mobile Devices – Incident Identified</td>
<td>Retain until matter resolved and until exhaustion of appeals process then Destroy.</td>
<td>NON-ARCHIVAL NON-ESSENTIAL OFM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes all mobile recordings, regardless of where recording device is mounted*, such as:
- Bodycam (device on officer’s chest, shoulder, head, cap, sunglasses, pole/stick, etc.);
- Dashcam (or any other device mounted on the inside or outside of the vehicle – car, motorcycle, boat, all terrain vehicle (ATV), bike, scooter, etc.);
- Dogcam (on an animal’s body - canine, equine, etc.);
- Drone (unmanned aerial vehicle or any other remote controlled equipment).

Excludes records covered by:
- Intercepted Communications/Conversations – Recorded (DAN LE2010-075);
- Recordings from Mobile Devices – Buffered Data/Images (DAN LE2017-001).

### No Incident Identified – 60 days

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>DESIGNATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LE2016-001 Rev. 2</td>
<td>Recordings from Mobile Devices – Incident Not Identified (Body Worn Cameras)</td>
<td>Retain for 60 days after date of recording then Destroy.</td>
<td>NON-ARCHIVAL NON-ESSENTIAL OFM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recordings, created by the law enforcement agency using body worn cameras, provided that the recording is not known to have captured a unique or unusual action from which litigation or criminal prosecution is expected or likely to result.

Excludes records covered by:
- Intercepted Communications/Conversations – Recorded (DAN LE2010-075);
- Recordings from Mobile Devices – Buffered Data/Images (DAN LE2017-001);
- Recordings from Mobile Devices – Incident Identified (DAN LE09-01-08);
- Recordings from Mobile Devices – Incident Not Identified (DAN LE09-01-09);

*Note: Retention based on 60-day requirement for certain body worn camera recordings (RCW 42.56.240).*

The *Law Enforcement Records Retention Schedule* is available from Washington State Archives’ website.

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Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from Washington State Archives:

[www.sos.wa.gov/archives](http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives)

[recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov](mailto:recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov)