

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

Purpose: Provide guidance to local government 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 for County Sheriffs and Police Departments are listed in the *Law Enforcement Records Retention Schedule* approved by the Local Records Committee in accordance with [RCW 40.14.070](#).

Incident Identified – Until Matter Resolved and Exhaustion of Appeals Process

| DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER (DAN) | DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS | RETENTION AND DISPOSITION ACTION | DESIGNATION |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| LE09-01-08 Rev. 3 | <p>Recordings from Mobile Devices – Incident Identified</p> <p>Recordings, created by the law enforcement agency using mobile recording devices, and whether manually or automatically triggered, that are <i>known</i> to have captured a unique or unusual action from which litigation or criminal prosecution is expected or likely to result.</p> <p>Includes all mobile recordings, regardless of where recording device is mounted, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). <p>Excludes records covered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Intercepted Communications/Conversations – Recorded (DAN LE2010-075);</i> • <i>Recordings from Mobile Devices – Buffered Data/Images (DAN LE2017-001).</i> | <p>Retain until matter resolved <i>and</i> until exhaustion of appeals process <i>then</i> Destroy.</p> | NON-ARCHIVAL NON-ESSENTIAL OFM |

No Incident Identified – 60 days

| DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER (DAN) | DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS | RETENTION AND DISPOSITION ACTION | DESIGNATION |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| LE2016-001 Rev. 1 | <p>Recordings from Mobile Devices – Incident Not Identified (Body Worn Cameras Subject to RCW 42.56.240)</p> <p>Recordings, created by the law enforcement agency using body worn cameras, <i>provided that</i> the recording is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captured using a body worn camera subject to RCW 42.56.240; <i>and,</i> • <i>Not known</i> to have captured a unique or unusual incident or action from which litigation or criminal prosecution is expected or likely to result. <p>Excludes records covered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Intercepted Communications/Conversations – Recorded (DAN LE2010-075);</i> • <i>Recordings from Mobile Devices – Buffered Data/Images (DAN LE2017-001);</i> • <i>Recordings from Mobile Devices – Incident Identified (DAN LE09-01-08);</i> • <i>Recordings from Mobile Devices – Incident Not Identified (DAN LE09-01-09);</i> <p><i>Note: Retention based on 60-day requirement for certain body worn camera recordings (RCW 42.56.240).</i></p> | <p>Retain for 60 days after date of recording <i>then</i> Destroy.</p> | NON-ARCHIVAL NON-ESSENTIAL OFM |

Copies of the *Law Enforcement Records Retention Schedule* are available from Washington State Archives’ website at:

<http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/RecordsManagement/RecordsRetentionSchedulesforLawEnforcementAgencies.aspx>

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

www.sos.wa.gov/archives
recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov