*The American Sniper Association’s position remains consistent regarding the difficulty of body worn cameras on law enforcement snipers, as it is unrealistic to expect a police sniper, who typically deploys outside of close proximity to a rapidly evolving crisis site, to provide the same audio and video as an officer who has direct contact. The* Police Sniper Training and Operations Manual 2nd Edition *lists the limitations and concerns; however, we also realize the reality departments are faced with in today’s questioning society. The predisposed notion is that if there is no audio and video, then an event did not happen according to the officer’s testimony. However, this is factually untrue. Departments are placed in the tough spot of an unruly online or physical crowd demanding the “truth” from an audio-video recording device, and as such, a department is willing to send a device that is not properly configured for a police sniper to attempt to quell any possible unrest before it happens. Understanding that it is better for us to provide some smart boundaries for our nation’s police officers in these circumstances, we provide the below policy guidelines. Please consider them a framework as you continue to protect your citizens and officers.*



1. **Definitions**

Law enforcement sniper - A specially selected, equipped, highly trained team member, who makes use of his training and equipment, to covertly insert into a position of advantage, to provide real-time information to his team, and if necessary, to bring precision fire against designated targets.

Hide - a position created by a sniper to allow them to intrude into a crisis incident to potentially observe, report, and/or provide lethal coverage.

Body-worn camera - equipment issued by the department to digitally record the audio and/or video of a police sniper.

Activate - the act of initiating recording.

Deactivate - the act of ceasing a recording.

1. **Specialized unit deployment**

When an officer of this department is deployed as a law enforcement sniper, this policy will supersede any BWC officer policy regarding wearing, deployment, activation, and deactivation.

1. **Officer Safety**

Officer safety will take precedence over the recording of events and shall be the primary consideration when contacting citizens, moving to and from a crisis site, responding to emergency situations, and other law enforcement functions. Nevertheless, when it is safe, reasonable, and practicable to activate a digital audio/video camera, a sniper will do so in accordance with the procedures set forth herein.

1. **Operation and Deployment with BWC**
2. **Placement**

Generally, body-worn cameras cannot be placed on the outside front of a sniper’s uniform or vest due to the nature of camouflage, hide materials used, or positional shooting. Therefore, a primary location should be found that does not interfere with the function of the sniper. Examples depend on the equipment and setup available to each sniper, such as mounting in or on a cargo pocket, equipment pocket, or equipment bag.

The secondary placement would be, once in a final hide location, if the time and safety of all involved allow, to place the BWC in the open, next to the sniper.

The intention of the placement is to allow video/audio of the sniper’s interaction with the crisis incident while understanding the articulable impractical demands of the device on a sniper’s function.

1. **Activation**

It is not the expectation of this policy for a sniper to record every moment of a crisis incident, as briefings with the command post and other team personnel may be considered privileged, as has been set forth by the court and federal FOIA exemptions. However, snipers are expected to activate a camera when they reasonably believe they will interact with a member of the public on their way to or from a hide location, or once set up in a hide location.

If a sniper chooses to activate the BWC once on scene at a crisis incident, disabling the audio capture (muting) of a recorded incident is authorized when discussing tactics or strategy with the command post or team members and reenabling audio once those privileged communications conclude.

If an officer fails to activate a body-worn camera in accordance with this policy or a BWC is unintentionally deactivated during an incident, such failure to record will be reported to the officer’s supervisor and the reason for failure documented.

1. **Deactivation**

A sniper may deactivate in the following instances: if the activation was in error, at the conclusion of an encounter, clearing the call, or after the completion of a planned activity (e.g., service of a warrant or other process, completion of a special operation, etc.)

A sniper should announce on camera that an incident is concluded, and recording will cease prior to deactivation.

If an unintentional deactivation occurs and the sniper realizes it during the incident, they should reactivate the BWC, and, if it is safe to do so, advise on the recording.

1. **Limitations and Malfunctions**

The Department recognizes technical malfunctions may occur with the BWC equipment including limited battery life. If an officer fails to record the entire incident, the officer shall advise their supervisor and document the reasons why a recording was not made, was interrupted, or was terminated.

A limitation or malfunction of the BWC shall not cause a sniper to leave their hide position in a rapidly evolving crisis incident and will not be considered a violation of the recording policy.