

Body cameras might help police officers better deal with the false accusations an...

[Government](#)



## **Why are body cameras needed for Police officers?**

Considering the use of body camera on cops are an important source of trust between citizens and police officers. This can decrease the amount of reports of officers using the force which may be helpful to keep the citizens safer.

The use of the force has been an extremely important topic as of late. The idea of using body cameras is not a very new topic its so that police officers can be monitored in the hopes of them following the rules more. There are some researches dating back to around 2007. As of recent body cameras have been in the news since Obama has recently started a fund to put body cameras on Police officers. Why he did was to bring more trust to the police of Ferguson Missouri. The topic of Cameras on cops is a slightly controversial one, most of it comes from the little information it is in the public eye. Thus there has been multiple studies in and out side of the us, the importance of privacy from the watch eye of the camera, you cannot forget the importance of officer opinion, and how could this topic be controversial.

To begin with there have been multiple studies of what the effects of body cameras are, there have been many in the united states and a few outside of the united states. As said by one of the officers in an experiment “ putting a camera on somebody, human nature is going to dictate that you’re going to mind your P’s and Q’s and you’re going to be on your best behaviour” (Mosendz, The Wired). This is from the Chief of police from Rialto, California, he was subjected to a year long study to see if the body cameras were successful. Mostly the results from this study were quite positive. After seeing these results it is easy to see that there are positive attributes to the

cameras. A statistic of the Rialto police force after one year of use, “ in the first year of use in Rialto use of force fell by 60% and citizen complaints by 88%” (Mosendz, The Wired). This comes from the same study as mentioned previously. It shows how greatly the results were able to fall during the study. The study lasted only a year and it was able to make a lot of improvement in the short amount of time. The decrease of citizen complaints will help reduce paperwork and time wasted on false complaints. It also helps to give a better eye to see what police officers will use the force unnecessarily. It might even reduce the number eventually of police brutality cases against innocent people, since the higher ups may be able to isolate those who are abusing their powers. Just like in retail a higher up is able to see who might have been stealing from their work, we can use the cameras to see what officers are abusing the power of their job. A statistic was show of a study that was around the San Jose california “ The benefits of cameras to local governments have been vast. In certain studies, data demonstrated more than 50% reduction in the total number of incidents of use-of-force compared to control-conditions, and an 88% decrease in complaints against officers” (Council members, sanjoseca. gov)This shows how efficient that the cameras are even to the communities around them. Out of the few studies researched there was mostly positive results and some sort of decrease of complaints or the use of force. There has yet to surface an experiment that has some sort of negative result, but until that time times we will have to wait and see the results.

Another important view is the view of the police themselves it's also important to see what they think about the subject. What an officer had to

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say was “ I tell the officers every day. You usually don’t get hurt by the videos you have. What hurts you is when you are supposed to have a video but, for whatever reason, you don’t” (U. S. Department of Justice, Justice.gov). This is an important though it can be used with a lot of different cases, it doesn’t just apply to the Police officers. It is a universal statement that is a good rule to follow by, you don’t normally want something that might harm yourself on official records. In a study done it was said that most officers had a positive point of view of the cameras in the future and that 77% believed it would cause officers to behave more professionally. This helps show a very important side to the argument it’s the own police officers views. If 77% of the officers are positive about the body cameras then they should be implicated. The idea of authority really shines through here. Its kind of like a stop light camera most people will stop at a blinking yellow light bit a few will pass through it. This metaphor can be used for the cops since even though they have camera they still might try to slip past the yellow light before it turns to red. In the UK there was a study on body cameras and the thoughts of the police officers surprisingly similar, 80% believed it would improve efficiency and 76% it would improve evidence quality and 76% believed it might help facilitate prosecution of domestic violence. This helps to show what their thoughts were on how efficient the evidence would be. The cameras may be able to see close ups of criminals or undesirable acts upon police or citizens.

In addition one of the things that come up when the use of body cameras in mentioned in the topic of privacy on the police and citizens side. A common worry is that, “ body worn camera have cited numerous concerns over

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citizen privacy”(White,) . This is quite a valid point, a victim of a serious event may not want to be filmed or recorded at that current time. But the information if it is to be used in case should at the consent of the victim to be blurred or to have their vice altered. This helps a the victim in a case that they are uncomfortable with being shown or heard on camera. This is hard to compare with retail since usually people don't really mind being recorded at a store. But a suggestion on this is, “ some victims or witnesses may agree to only audio recording. So an officer may agree to point away from the person” (White,). What this may help is to bring a little more transparency to the subject. It will help to make citizens less weary of talking with a police officer being monitored. They might not try to file a report that the officer invaded their privacy. As a matter of fact it may even bring in the future concluded trust between officer and citizen in the long run. If and officer happens to avoid to do this or forgets they should be in some way punished. Perhaps after a considerable amount of time ignoring this act of common courtesy the officer is fired or fined. Since the citizens privacy should be respected as well as an officers. Some people may say, “ officers should be required to obtain consent prior to recording with crime victims” (Miller, Tulliver, Cops. usdoj. gov). This goes along with the statement above it further extends this proposition. That brings up the topic of making sure ask the officers should ask for consent before any kind of recording happens. In a dire situation it is understandable to not ask for consent but in other situations it should always be one of the first things.

Nevertheless most people will argue how the might be a waste of time and a damper on an officer's safety. But in actuality the use use of body cameras is

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not a waste of time it is proven to reduce citizen complaints and an officer's safety can be secured by body cameras. What someone may say is that " An attacker knowing that there is a body camera may attack the area of which the camera is attached". This might be a case but I have seen that they either sit on a pair of glasses or is clipped into an officer's shirt. In a situation of someone attempting to destroy this an officer might be allowed to take it off quickly. This could help increase the officer's safety the camera could be made of a tough plastic that can help protect an officer in that situation. A officer's safety is also important they should also be there to protect and in certain situations it is okay to use the force. A situation that maybe is a confirmed hostile situation gut feelings almost never right sometimes it can be better to take a chance. An argument used often is " Cameras alone cannot fix the twin problems of police accountability and the legitimate use of force." This is indeed true, body cameras are not a permanent fix it is a temporary one. It is there to help push along to fixing the problem of the use of force. But in many experiments tested by the United states and a few other countries. It was able to show a large decrease in the amount of force used. What this should be seen as if a push to fix our problems in the police system this should not be depended on alone it should be put with other things. For the reason for that is to leave room to put stricter punishments for police officers who do use the force and who may end up harming the victim seriously. This will help us to slow down the number of cases where innocent people are killed. Also that prejudice among the victims of police brutality is stopped. But considering things usually cannot be stopped completely. Another thing argued is how will the data be stored one of the

arguments were the cost and the time needed to transfer the data onto a storage system. One of the recommendations were like a cloud to backup the data onto and pay a regular subscription. They also argued that the source would be off base and would defeat the purpose of having it on hand. But yes it does in a way defeat the purpose but it also saves time and maybe money. It better to take risks of it getting hacked or being off base than to spend time transferring camera footage onto hard drives.

All in all, one can conclude that body cameras are an important essential to starting to regain citizen trust. Body cameras in the long run won't fix the problem but will help push it along. The use of them will help majorly but in the end all we have to do is educate the people in power to not use their positions to their advantage. This may bring about the change in the future but it isn't the main dish we still need many more important changes in order to fix the problems we hope body cameras would. we need In the end we might be able to push on from the past and bring trust back to the police officers slowly but surely.