

August 25, 2026

Interim Chief Andre Sayles
Seattle Police Department
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Chief Sayles:

Please see the Management Action Recommendation below.

Case Number

- 2026OPA-0045 / 2026COMP-0003

Topic

- Body-Worn Video and Sensitive Information

Summary

- Following a narcotics arrest, the Named Employee (NE) deactivated their Body-Worn Video (BWV) while questioning a Community Member (CM) at a Police Precinct without documenting their reasons for the deactivation.

Analysis

- The NE questioned the CM in their holding cell two to three times in plain clothes. To protect the CM's identity, a sergeant approved the NE deactivating their BWV to question the CM as a potential witness or informant. The rationale for this decision was not documented.
- [SPD Policy 16.090 – In-Car and Body-Worn Video](#) directs officers to record specific events on BWV including, “questioning victims, suspects, or witnesses.” SPD Policy 16.090-POL-2(2). The policy makes exceptions allowing officers to turn off BWV in “sensitive areas” like restrooms and therapeutic facilities, and to protect “privacy and dignity” such as when interviewing children, making a death notification, or where “the use of BWV would impede or limit the cooperation of a victim or witness.” *Id.* at POL-2(3)-(5).
- Employees are required to document the reason for not recording a required event or for deactivating their BWV. [SPD Policies 16.090-POL-1\(6\) and POL-2\(8\)](#).
- Washington State Law exempts from public disclosure “information revealing the identity of persons who are witnesses to or victims of a crime...if disclosure would endanger any person’s life, physical safety, or property.”¹
- [SPD Policy 6.130](#) defines a confidential informant (CI) and provides limitations and guidelines for their use. Though policy does not discuss BWV in the context of attempting to recruit a CI.



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- [SPD Policy 6.135](#) defines and outlines the processes related to working with a Cooperating Witness (CW) but does not discuss the use of BWV as it relates to CWs.
 - OPA reviewed comparable policies from other large police departments that operate under Washington State law.
 - Spokane², Bellevue³, Tacoma⁴, and Everett⁵ each discuss not recording communication with informants and other sensitive information and the need to document these decisions.
 - Everett's policy specifically guides officers to document such decisions in a "confidential informant's file" rather than document it by written report or CAD.⁶

Recommendations

- SPD should consider revising SPD Policies 16.090, 6.130, and 6.135 to include specific guidance on when and where to document, record, and deactivate BWV when working with sensitive information such as speaking with or attempting to recruit CIs or CWs.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bonnie J. Glenn".

Director Bonnie J. Glenn
Office of Police Accountability

Footnote 1: [RCW 42.56.240](#)

Footnote 2: Spokane Police Department. [Spokane Police Department Policy Manual](#). Policy 703.4 Body Cameras: Officer Responsibilities. Effective: 02/23/2024.

Footnote 3: Bellevue Police Department. [Bellevue Police Department Policy Manual](#). Policy 20.00.120—Body Worn Cameras.

Footnote 4: Tacoma Police Department. [Procedures Manual](#). Body Worn Cameras: Officer Responsibilities. Effective: 06/2020.

Footnote 5: Everett Police Department. [Policy Manual](#). Policy 9.33—Body Cameras: Purpose and Scope. Revised July 16, 2026.

Footnote 6: *Ibid*