

An Garda Síochána – Body Worn Cameras Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is a Body Worn Camera?

Body Worn Camera (BWC) refers to a small, lightweight camera, which is visibly worn by a Garda.

The BWC will be secured on a Garda member's chest facing forward.

The BWC records footage to its own internal encrypted storage, which is uploaded when the Garda docks the BWC in the station. Body Worn Camera footage is uploaded at end of shift so it can be used as evidence in court or is deleted after an agreed time period if it's not required as evidence.

When will Body Worn Cameras be in use by An Garda Síochána?

Body Worn Cameras will be worn by Gardaí within 4 Divisions – (Dublin South Central, Dublin North Central, Limerick and Waterford). The BWCs will be used by Gardaí allocated to the following Garda Stations; Store Street, Pearse Street, Kevin Street, Henry Street and Waterford. Upon completion of the POC, An Garda Síochána will reflect the learning arising from the exercise prior to any Procurement process for a national implementation of BWCs.

A full phased rollout of BWCs will begin based on the learning outcomes from the Proof of Concept, and following a fully procurement process in 2025.

Will An Garda Síochána have a policy governing the use of body cameras?

An Garda Síochána developed a draft Code of Practice (COP) for the operation of BWCs as part of the POC exercise, in accordance with section 47 of the Act. The draft COP was subject to a consultation process in accordance with section 47 of the Act, which included feedback from the Public Garda.ie Website, and Prescribed bodies. On completion, the Garda Commissioner submitted the draft COP to the Minister for Justice. The Minister for Justice has just commenced Part 2, Part 8 and other applicable sections of the Act and is viewable on the Irish Statute Book website at the following link [GARDA SÍOCHÁNA \(RECORDING DEVICES\) ACT 2023 \(Code of Practice\)](#).

When will the BWC be switched on?

The Codes of Practice clearly set out the operating parameters for Gardaí and are available to inform the public.

The BWC can be switched on and off by a Garda to record both audio and video footage.

Gardaí will normally activate their cameras at start of an incident, and will continue to record until it's no longer 'proportionate or necessary' or another system takes over, e.g. CCTV within a Garda station. Gardaí will use the cameras to:

- provide evidence in the investigation of an offence or suspected offence
- provide transparency, e.g. during a traffic stop or when force is necessary
- as an aide-memoire for the report of an encounter or incident

Is the BWC on at all times, recording everything?

No, it is not intended that the Gardaí will be recording for the full length of their work shift, the BWC is for use when Gardaí are responding to an incident, or using their Garda powers. The BWC use is

incident specific; unless a specific operation dictates it is used, officers will not be recording as part of normal patrolling.

How will I know if the BWC is recording?

The BWC will have a visible indicator, the exact indicator depending on the final type of BWC procured.

When will the BWC be turned off?

The BWC will be turned off; once the Garda has completed the incident they have been dispatched to.

What are the perceived benefits of the BWC?

- improve safety for Gardaí
- reduce complaints of Garda misconduct
- save time in court preparation and appearances
- lower costs for investigations and court appearances
- improve ability to collect evidence for trial
- enhance accountability
- reduce challenges around arrests

Are there places where Gardaí cannot use Body Worn Cameras?

There are times when members will be sensitive to a situation and can use discretion regarding their decision to activate the BWC while investigating certain incidents. These are clearly called out in the Codes of Practice.

Does a Garda have to stop recording if I ask him/her to?

No. A Garda is not required to stop recording upon request.

Do body cameras record both audio and video?

Yes.

How long will video be kept?

Video will be kept in accordance with policy. Generally, this is for a minimum period of 31 days.

Video deemed as evidential will be maintained longer depending on the type of incident in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, Law Enforcement Directive and data retention laws outlined in the Data Protection Act 2018.

What make and model of BWC will An Garda Síochána use?

There are 3 different Models of Cameras selected as part of the Proof of Concept.

In Dublin the Axon 4 Camera will be in use, in Limerick the Reveal K7 cameras and in Waterford the VB 400 cameras will be used.



What is a Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS)?

DEMS stands for Digital Evidence Management System

This is an ICT software solution that will enable An Garda Síochána to collect, store, manage and analyse digital evidence including BWC footage and CCTV.

The DEMS typically includes a public portal to facilitate publically uploaded dash-cam footage.

Can anyone in An Garda Síochána delete a video?

No. All of the video will be managed by the DEMS. Videos will be scheduled for deletion through an automated retention system after 31 days if it is non-evidentiary video. System deletions of videos will only be done after a criminal case is adjudicated in a court of law and the standard retention periods required for appeals are met.

What is the policy basis for introduction of BWC/ DEMS?

Recommendation 12 of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI). In their report [The Future of Policing in Ireland](#), CoFPI recommends that:

“An Garda Síochána should develop a plan to deploy body worn cameras. There is a significant amount of experience in other jurisdictions which could be tapped for best practice. Modern policing organisations around the world have found that body cameras can help to improve front line capability with the accurate recording of incidents, expedite analysis, enhance situational awareness, and sometimes protect police from harm.”

(Chapter 21 Digital Innovation and Information Management; Recommendation 12 - page 79).

Action 29 Ireland's Government Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2023 provides that An Garda Síochána “Explore the potential of an online portal for road users to upload footage of road traffic offences which could assist in prosecution.”

An Garda Síochána, on a daily basis, legally obtain cctv footage from private premises citizens across the country in support of criminal investigations.

An Garda Síochána, on a near daily basis, make appeals to the public for digital imagery in support of criminal investigations.

What is the legal basis for the introduction of BWC?

Legislative provision for the operation of Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) is provided for in Part 2 the Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) Act 2023 (“the Act”). To enable the Proof of Concept (POC), the Minister for Justice has commenced Part 2, Part 8 and other applicable sections of the Act. [GARDA SÍOCHÁNA \(RECORDING DEVICES\) ACT 2023 \(Code of Practice\)](#).

Are BWC GDPR compliant?

The introduction of BWCs will be in compliance with legislation and data captured will be stored and processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations, Law Enforcement Directive and Data retention laws outlined in the Data Protection Act 2018.

Has a Data Impact Protection Assessment been carried out?

A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been carried out prior to the introduction of BWCs.

Will images from An Garda Síochána BWC be made available to the public, as often happens in other jurisdictions?

An Garda Síochána will develop and publish detailed public policy for the use of BWCs following engagement with all relevant parties before BWCs are used in public.

What is the budget for BWCs?

The introduction of BWCs is a large-scale organisation-wide enterprise which will have a multi-million organisation cost over a 5 year procurement process. As this is the start of the public procurement process, it would be commercially inappropriate to put a specific budget on the project at this time. However the proposed budget for the Proof of Concept for 1 year in the 4 divisions, with 3 different suppliers was estimated to be €2.1m.

An Garda Síochána has successfully delivered on similar organisation-wide enterprise projects in recent years including Active Mobility (introduction of approx. 15,000 mobility devices across the organisation) and GardaSAFE.

Will additional training be required for the introduction of BWCs?

All BWC wearing members will be trained by eLearning and classroom courses before using the BWCs.

Training will also be provided for support staff in the DEMS and processing of any data.

Will a public information campaign be in place prior to the introduction of BWC?

An Garda Síochána will provide public information prior to the start of any use of BWCs.

Does An Garda Síochána have plans to use facial recognition technology with the video from the body cameras?

The RFI and Proof of Concept procurement processes were conducted under the legislative basis of the Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) Bill 2022 which does not include a provision for the use of Facial Recognition Technology (FRT). However, Government policy is to provide a legal basis for the retrospective use of FRT in defined circumstances with appropriate safeguards as part of separate legislation; currently envisaged as the Garda Síochána (Digital Management and Facial Recognition Technology) Bill 2023.

An Garda Síochána has no plans to use live facial recognition on BWCs and the DEMS that are part of the POC have no capability of FRT.

While BWC footage is expected to be relatively small in volume and not a significant source for retrospective FRT, other CCTV evidence collected and stored on any future DEMS, as a result of a future procurement process, may be. All analysis tools (AI or FRT) must operate on a decision support basis only; Garda policy prevents autonomous machine decision-making where this could adversely impact a member of the public.