



8 factors to evaluate before purchasing body cameras



Traditionally, law enforcement agencies rarely made granular purchasing decisions around body cameras. But as more city and state mandates are implemented, many are now tasked with deciding the best path forward for BWCs in their department. Which means if your agency hasn't explored purchasing them, now is the time to start.

Yet, with so many body camera options available, it can be difficult to know where to begin.

We can help

We've compiled eight points that are worth considering when researching body camera purchases. While none of these points are overly complex or time-consuming, by looking at them holistically, you can ensure you're making the right decision for your agency.



In the heat of the moment, you shouldn't have to think about your body camera

That's why Motorola Solutions APX radios can now automatically trigger V700 body camera recordings through a push of the emergency radio button. Whether it's to support a prosecution, educate the community, or enhance training, it's vital that you secure video evidence of critical incidents. Automated video recording helps ensure that the evidence is there when you need it, immediately and automatically. Other technologies can trigger BWC recordings. But why settle for anything less than your two-way radio, the trusted lifeline you use every day, to ensure you always get the video evidence you need?

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8 factors to consider when purchasing body cameras



Dependability

Law enforcement agencies need confidence that body cameras are up to the job, every time. What does that look like? A dependable camera is a durable camera. One that won't come loose from your uniform while in pursuit and won't break if it falls in dirt, water, or dust. One that can survive everyday drops and jolts with ease.

Dependability also includes functionality. Are you confident your body camera will never lose a recording, that dates and times are correctly associated with files, and evidence always follows a verifiable chain of custody? Fair or not, lost video evidence can place agencies in a negative light, signaling a lack of seriousness around transparency and accountability efforts. It makes it that much harder to close cases, hold suspects accountable, and clear deputies of wrongdoing.

Yet, dependability can be hard to ascertain when evaluating a possible purchase. Often, dependability issues are only found after using a device for some time. That's why it's important to reach out to other sheriffs and ask about their equipment and systems, including what they use and how well it works. Make sure you're speaking with a diverse group of folks, not just those referred to you by a specific vendor.



Efficiency

Officers have enough to do without also having to be IT managers. Evidence storage, packaging, and transfer should be seamless, so that officers can spend more time on the street, not in the station.

That's why it's worth asking specific questions on camera efficiency before purchasing a system, such as: Can video be uploaded via WIFI or LTE out in the field, so cameras don't have to be plugged in back at the station to offload video? Can video be tagged with incident numbers, then automatically sorted and packaged in a workflow? Does the system make it easy to log-in? Are video searches fast and reliable?

The answers to all of these questions should be a resounding "yes." Anything less is a red flag and a clue that the system may prove to be too time-consuming once implemented.



Price and payment structure

Many departments are handed a mandate to implement body cameras, without the funding needed to make it happen. Others may have some funding available, but struggle to prioritize a long list of technology needs. That's why pricing and payment options are so important. Many technologies can be purchased "as a service," meaning that payments are made in regular installments, spread out over time as an operating expense. These plans usually allow you to get up and running faster. In addition, many of these pay-as-you-go plans keep systems regularly updated, so your equipment is never outdated. Understanding grant sources and requirements is also critical as many body camera purchases can be supported by grant dollars.

Here are some questions to consider as you think through pricing options:

- What are the allowable ways for your agency to purchase technology equipment and services?
Are the current processes working well?
- What is your agency's current and anticipated budget situation? Is it time to make a major outlay or spread costs out over time?
- How quickly do you need to be up and running with body cameras and video systems?
A payment plan with a monthly fee allows near-immediate implementation.
- How important is budget predictability to your department right now? Monthly payment plans usually come with routine equipment and software updates included and often include video cloud storage, as well.
- Are there grants available? What types of payments do they allow? Can you purchase up front? Will the grant allow you to pre-purchase a number of months or years of service at the start?



Integration

Modern law enforcement agencies typically have multiple technology and communication systems, from body and in-car cameras to radios, dispatch systems, and digital evidence lockers. Integration between and within systems is essential for the safest, most effective responses.

That's why it's critical to understand if a body camera system will work with your existing public safety ecosystem or if it will lock you into a walled ecosystem. For instance, some body cameras integrate with other law enforcement cameras such as in-car or fixed, providing combined footage from multiple viewpoints. Others integrate with dispatch and command for remote supervision and assistance in heightened-risk events. These options are important as they can provide far greater functionality than you would receive in a camera alone.

CommandCentral

Complete. Collaborative. Connected.

CommandCentral delivers a suite of cloud-native applications that centralize all of your information, using intelligent correlation to collect and build an accurate and complete case file as the incident unfolds.

Every data source is connected and unified to uncover actionable intelligence and automate what can be automated — so you can focus on what matters most. The result is a confident 360° view, bringing clarity to decisions and simplifying collaborative workflows. When responders know what they're facing before they arrive, they can move quicker to keep the public — and themselves — safe.

CommandCentral connects your teams, giving deputies the right information when they need it most. With CommandCentral, you can knock down data silos with the confidence that every detail has been captured and no evidence has been left behind. Securely capture, manage and share all case content from a single location.

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Transparency and community engagement

Body cameras are clearly an important tool for community engagement. The ability to share timely video with community members is critical to building and maintaining trust and can elicit information vital to a case. Consider choosing a system that makes it easy to share video through online community portals or password-protected links. Some camera systems also come bundled with additional community engagement software, such as anonymous community tipping software. These types of bundles may provide additional value, making a body camera purchase go further to build stronger community relationships for the same budget outlay.



Battery life

Public safety technology has to stand up to the demands of often unpredictable law enforcement environments. A day's work for an officer is never routine and it's important they're prepared for wherever the day takes them. That means any body camera must have a battery that can do the same. That could look like a camera with batteries that can last beyond a 12-hour shift, with the option to easily swap out batteries without having to return to the station. Alternatively, if your officers have shorter shifts or take-home privileges, a camera with a compact and efficient charging cable or dock is a good option, too. While this may seem like a straightforward factor, it's critical to deploying a functional camera system. Even the best camera is worthless without power. Any system that forces you to work around its schedule to charge, rather than working around yours, saps efficiency and effectiveness.



Ease of recording and maintenance

During an incident, officers need to focus on a successful resolution, not their body cameras. That requires fail proof operation that always captures needed video. Today, modern body cameras have the ability to make recording effortless, with the option to even record "after the fact." That means that in fast-moving or unexpected situations, officers don't have to think about turning on their camera, they can always go back to find the footage they need.

Look for camera systems that also include robust management tools, so deputies aren't tasked with maintenance and IT tasks. For example, some cameras include remote management tools that automatically notify management if an officer's BWC begins to malfunction or has been inoperable for a designated amount of time. With the right backend software, you can also run reports about camera health, and configure a malfunctioning camera's status so users can't check it out until it's been repaired.





Simple and secure case sharing

Prosecutors increasingly rely on video evidence to build their case. That may include video from body cameras, in-car cameras, or even a bystander's smartphone video, in addition to written reports, photos, audio and more. Choose a body camera system that seamlessly integrates with your records management system so you can finally say goodbye to the days of requesting DVDs and other files. With modern systems, all evidence is associated with a specific case, making it easy to receive and share consolidated digital evidence packs, with a complete and verified chain of custody. It's important that any system also include AES 256 encryption for highly secure data at rest and in transit.

Body cameras from Motorola Solutions

Safeguard your reputation and maintain community trust

Your officers need flexible solutions that can operate the way they do. That's why we have a variety of mission-critical body cameras, built for the rigors of the job - no matter how, or where, you work.

The intuitive VB400 delivers all of the features you need from a body camera - 1080p recording, a long battery life, built-in WiFi, Bluetooth and GPS - while also being easy to configure and use. Fitting seamlessly around your officers' existing workflows, with a choice of on-premises or cloud-based backend software, it's ideal for small- to mid-size agencies running a body video program for the first time.

Our powerful, state-of-the-art LTE V700 body camera captures critical incidents and keeps you connected throughout your shift. With LTE capabilities, your dispatcher will be able to view real-time location and video in CommandCentral Aware without the need for WiFi or the in-car camera. The V700 excellent camera lens allows you to capture clearer evidence in lowlight conditions. We also upgraded the detachable battery with self cleaning contacts to ensure a reliable power source. And with Record-After-the-Fact, you can retrieve critical video days after the event occurred - even if recording wasn't triggered or initiated.

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| | Motorola Solutions VB400 & V700 Body Cameras |
| | Dependable |
| | Flexible Pricing Opportunities |
| | Critical Technology Integrations |
| | Swappable Batteries or Flexible Charging Architecture |
| | Easy Recording and Maintenance |
| | Simple and Secure Case Sharing |





Choosing the right body cameras

Protect your community, your officers and your evidence

Body cameras are a critical tool to enhance your department's relationship with the community, providing additional transparency and accountability. They also protect officers by providing clear, unbiased evidence of actions taken in a specific event.

Yet, adding body cameras to your department's technology toolkit can be a significant investment. With more cities and, possibly soon, states mandating their use, now is the time to get started evaluating which type of body systems are best for your agency.

Researching and finding the right camera solution, one that's durable and dependable, secure and easy to use, plus fully integrated with the devices and platforms you already have in place, can often seem like a daunting road to follow. By considering the eight key factors outlined in this guide, we're confident you'll be ready to start the journey with the knowledge needed for success.

To learn more about body camera solutions from Motorola Solutions, please visit: motorolasolutions.com/bodyworncameras



Get help with grants

Looking to make new video systems more attainable for your department? Motorola Solutions has partnered with the grant experts at PoliceGrantsHelp to offer you FREE customized help obtaining grants for body and other video systems for law enforcement. This includes grant research, grant alert notices and grant application reviews. Whether you're just starting your project or need to add the final touches to an application, consultants can provide the grant resources you need to acquire body cameras.

[Start your grant search](#)



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