

**Benefit or Burden? The Impact of Body-Worn Cameras on Police Officers' Operational Efficiency**

Tara Javaheri

j0450136

Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Law Enforcement Studies, Justice Institute of British Columbia

**Author Note**

This paper was completed for Laws-4003: Capstone Research Project, taught by Kelsea Perry. This paper is 5,747 words and was submitted on November 22, 2024.

I would like to thank Sgt. Ingram of the Delta Police Department for his invaluable insights. Research support also came from the JIBC Library, JIBC Writing Centre, and Kelsea Perry.

### **Abstract**

My research paper, based on secondary data analysis, explores the impact of body-worn cameras (BWCs) on policing, with a particular emphasis on how these devices affect police officers' operational efficiency, behavior, and overall work environment within Canadian law enforcement. While BWCs are often seen as tools for enhancing accountability and transparency, my study identifies significant challenges associated with their implementation, including the administrative burdens they impose and the limited existing literature on their effects in a Canadian context. My paper delves into the surveillance effects of BWCs on officers, examining how the knowledge of being recorded may influence their interactions with the public and adherence to protocols. I advocate for a qualitative research approach to gain a deeper understanding of officers' perspectives and the implications of constant monitoring on their behavior and decision-making. Additionally, I emphasize the critical need for clear policies and regulations to ensure that BWCs are integrated effectively into policing practices. By highlighting the necessity for further exploration into the unique effects of BWCs on officers, my study aims to inform future policy decisions and contribute to improved policing practices across Canada.

*Keywords:* body-worn cameras, policing, officer impacts, operational efficiency, surveillance effects, Canadian law enforcement, accountability

**Table of Contents**

Abstract.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Literature Review.....	6
Impact on Citizen Complaints.....	6
Transparency vs. Surveillance.....	7
Need for Policies.....	8
Technological Limitations.....	9
Training Effectiveness.....	10
Methodology.....	10
Results.....	13
Enhanced Accountability but Limited External Transparency.....	14
Officer Perception and the Balance Between Surveillance and Efficiency.....	15
Efficiency challenges and Procedural Impacts.....	16
Discussion.....	19
Strengths of Research and Resources.....	19
Limitations and Challenges.....	20
Reflections and Future Directions.....	21
Recommendations.....	21
Conclusion.....	23
References.....	25
Appendix.....	29

## **Benefit or Burden? The Impact of Body-Worn Cameras on Police Officers' Operational Efficiency**

Body-worn cameras (BWCs) have become popular in law enforcement. Their first known usage took place in the United Kingdom in 2005-2006, and less than ten years later, they started to be used in organizations throughout the world, initially as part of small-scale pilot studies and then as regular in a large number of police agencies (Boivin & Gendron, 2022). Their use has increased rapidly.

A BWC program's overall goal is to document law enforcement personnel's encounters with the public while on duty. BWCs are praised for collecting evidence and safeguarding cops from false charges of misbehavior (Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada [OPC], 2015). Another compelling reason for BWCs is to improve police accountability and professionalism (OPC, 2015). However, the operational impact of BWC on police officers remains under-explored. Officers are required to integrate these devices into their everyday tasks, but it is unclear whether this promotes efficiency or imposes additional bureaucratic and technological challenges that detract from their core responsibilities.

My interest in this topic started during a discussion with Sgt. Ingram, the Delta Police Department's BWC coordinator, who is responsible for developing and rolling out the department's tactical technology. As the first agency in British Columbia to implement BWCs, Delta Police Department's experience provided invaluable insights. During our session, Sgt. Ingram described how BWCs have significantly improved evidence collection and enhanced transparency within the department (personal communication, Feb. 22, 2024). However, he also outlined the challenges of presenting BWC footage in court, noting that courts often require full transcriptions of video evidence, adding to the administrative burden (personal communication,

Feb. 22, 2024). The tasks of video retention and meeting other legal requirements further raised the question in my mind: are BWCs truly making policing more efficient, or do they create new hardships? Despite these challenges, Sgt. Ingram remains a strong advocate for BWCs, which added to my enthusiasm for exploring this topic further.

My study aims to investigate how BWCs affect the daily tasks of police officers, specifically by focusing on whether their use leads to increased operational efficiency or presents additional workloads. By understanding the balance between these outcomes, my research tries to provide valuable insights into the real-world implications of implementing BWC technology within law enforcement agencies.

The main question guiding my research is: How do BWCs impact the police officers' operational efficiency? And the sub-questions would be: Do BWCs simplify the evidence collection process and improve the accuracy of reports? What technological and administrative challenges do officers face when using BWCs?

My study will focus on the experiences of police officers in Canada with BWCs in operational tasks such as report writing, evidence collection, and being monitored. It will exclude areas like public perception of BWCs or their effects on legal outcomes. This inclusion/exclusion criterion is designed to keep a narrow focus on the operational and administrative impacts. Additionally, this approach sees the topic from the officers' perspectives and gives attention to their concerns and experiences.

The significance of my study is because it addresses a gap in the existing research on BWCs by focusing on the officer's perspective. The findings could influence future policy decisions, officer training, and BWC technology development.

My study's limitations include a shortage of Canadian research on BWCs, likely due to the fact that not all police departments have adopted their use, with some still in the pilot phase. Additionally, much of the existing literature focuses on evaluating BWCs from the public's perspective or their broader effects on policing policies and procedures, and there is a significant gap in research that examines the topic from the officers' point of view.

### **Literature Review**

After reviewing the literature, five key themes emerge: the role of BWCs in reducing citizen complaints, their dual function as transparency and surveillance tools, the need for standardized policies, technological limitations, and the role of training in their implementation.

#### **Impact on Citizen Complaints**

One of the most consistent findings across the reviewed articles is the role of BWCs in reducing citizen complaints. According to Braga et al. (2018), officers equipped with BWCs experienced fewer complaints and use-of-force reports than their non-BWC counterparts. Similarly, Löfstrand and Backman (2021) highlight how officers feel that BWCs help protect them from false accusations, particularly in cases of alleged excessive force. These findings suggest a “civilizing effect” of BWCs on police-citizen encounters, reinforcing the potential for BWCs to improve police-community relations (Saulnier et al. 2021).

In alignment with these observations, Bud (2016a) notes significant reductions in complaints in jurisdictions where BWCs were implemented. For instance, an experiment in Rialto, California, reported an 87.5% decrease in citizen complaints and a 59% reduction in use-of-force incidents when officers were equipped with BWCs. Similarly, a study in Mesa, Arizona, found a 48% reduction in citizen complaints and a 75% decrease in use-of-force complaints.

These outcomes are attributed to officers being more mindful of their actions and adhering to legal and constitutional standards when BWCs are engaged.

However, while these studies suggest a positive impact, Bud (2016a) emphasizes the variability of results based on context and program implementation. Additionally, the literature reveals a gap in long-term studies examining the sustained influence of BWCs on complaint rates across different jurisdictions. Addressing this gap is crucial to understanding the broader and enduring impact of BWCs on police-community dynamics.

### **Transparency vs. Surveillance**

Another emerging theme is the dual function of BWCs as tools for both transparency and internal surveillance. While BWCs aim to improve police accountability, officers often perceive them as instruments of surveillance by their supervisors. Löfstrand and Backman (2021) emphasize that officers believe the cameras are used primarily for managerial oversight, raising concerns about the effects on their autonomy and work environment. Sandhu and Simmons (2023) take this further by framing officers as “filmmakers,” suggesting that the way officers position and activate cameras shapes not only public perceptions but also internal evaluations of their behavior.

In addition to their impact on internal surveillance, BWCs also raise broader concerns about citizen surveillance. According to Bud (2016b), BWCs are proposed to enhance police transparency and accountability by documenting officers' duties and interactions with citizens, thereby reducing exposure to unwarranted complaints and civil litigation. However, their mobility and flexibility present significant privacy challenges, as obtaining citizen consent for recording is often impractical. Bud (2016b) also highlights the integration of biometric technologies, such as facial recognition, which amplifies BWCs' surveillance capabilities and

raises the potential for unprecedented levels of citizen monitoring. These concerns are further compounded by the lack of specific legislation in Canada to govern the use of BWCs, underscoring the need for legal frameworks that balance the benefits of transparency with the risks to privacy rights.

While the literature presents a consensus on the role of BWCs in officer monitoring, it remains debated whether this dual function positively or negatively affects officers' performance and well-being, as well as citizen privacy and trust.

### **Need for Policies**

Several articles discuss the need for clear, standardized policies regarding the use of BWCs. Saulnier et al. (2021) argue for a national BWC policy in Canada to address legal challenges and reduce resource burdens on individual police services. They identify key areas that need to be addressed, such as privacy, data storage, and access to footage. While most authors agree on the importance of policy, there is a debate over whether a one-size-fits-all policy is feasible, given the varying legal frameworks and community expectations in different regions.

In line with these discussions, Choi et al. (2024) emphasize that clear policies are essential for the effective implementation of BWCs, helping to ensure their intended benefits are realized. Specific guidelines on when and how officers should activate their cameras are crucial for maintaining transparency and accountability. Clear policies also help address privacy concerns for both officers and civilians and standardize practices across different departments, which can lead to increased compliance with BWC usage. This can, in turn, reduce ambiguity, improve public trust in law enforcement, and alleviate officers' concerns about constant



surveillance and misuse of footage. By promoting officer buy-in, well-defined policies can also reduce resistance to the technology, fostering a more supportive environment for BWC adoption. The gaps here lie in the lack of comprehensive research into how these policies can be practically implemented across diverse police services, with varying legal frameworks and community expectations further complicating the issue.

### **Technological Limitations**

Another theme focuses on the technological limitations of BWCs, particularly concerns over the quality and reliability of the footage. Boivin and Gendron (2022) address the concern that BWC footage may not always capture the full context of an incident, raising questions about its usefulness in providing a complete narrative of events. Their study suggests that reports written by officers should complement, rather than replicate, BWC footage. This highlights the need for caution in over-relying on BWCs as a definitive source of truth.

In addition to concerns over footage quality, Gaub et al. (2016) identify several technological limitations that impact the effectiveness and acceptance of BWCs among officers. These include inadequate battery life, which often requires frequent recharging or battery changes, especially during long shifts. Some officers also report difficulties with the ease of use of BWCs, which can hinder their willingness to consistently use the technology. Comfort is another challenge, as some officers find BWCs uncomfortable to wear, potentially affecting their overall adoption. Furthermore, the significant costs associated with data storage and redaction often exceed the initial cost of the cameras themselves. Downloading data at the end of shifts can also be time-consuming and cumbersome for officers.

While technological concerns are widely acknowledged, there is limited research exploring how technological advancements might resolve issues such as incomplete footage, battery life, and data storage.

### **Training Effectiveness**

A final theme is the role of training in the effective implementation of BWCs. Several studies, including Goetschel and Peha (2017), emphasize that proper training is essential for officers to feel confident using BWCs and to ensure that the cameras are employed in ways that enhance transparency and accountability. However, the literature reveals a gap in empirical research on how different training approaches impact the effective use of BWCs. There is also little discussion on how training could address officers' concerns about the cameras creating additional administrative burdens (Goetschel & Peha, 2017).

In alignment with these observations, Alda and Dammert (2024) stress that training is crucial for maximizing the benefits of BWCs. It ensures that officers are proficient in handling the cameras, activating them at the right times, reviewing footage, tagging videos, and using recorded data to supplement reports or identify investigative leads. Continuous training helps officers understand both the technical aspects of the cameras and the policies governing their use. Proper training also supports compliance with mandatory activation policies and helps integrate BWCs seamlessly into daily operations and workflows (Alda & Dammert, 2024). This ultimately contributes to improved police efficiency and performance, addressing concerns over the administrative burdens that might arise from BWC use.

### **Methodology**

My study focused on secondary data related to Canadian police officers' use of BWCs in operational tasks. However, given that not all departments in Canada have implemented BWCs

and the limited amount of Canadian research on the topic, it was necessary to include sources from the U.S. and other countries where BWCs have been in use for a longer period. These regions offered more extensive data and literature, which provided valuable insights to inform the study.

This was a secondary research study employing a qualitative approach. My study involved the analysis of existing research, case studies, and reports on BWCs from various Canadian police departments. A secondary research method was chosen due to the time constraints of this 14-week course, which did not allow for primary data collection. This method was also more time-efficient and allowed for a comprehensive review of data that may not have been easily accessible through primary research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

My research adopted a pragmatic worldview, which prioritizes practical applications and solutions over theoretical considerations. This approach emphasizes real-world outcomes and focuses on addressing the practical challenges and benefits associated with using BWC technology. In the context of my study, this meant analyzing how BWCs are implemented in daily policing tasks and how officers adapt to their use. Rather than solely exploring abstract principles or theoretical frameworks, my research centered on tangible impacts, such as whether BWCs improve operational efficiency or create additional burdens for officers. The goal was to understand the direct consequences of this adaptation, both positive and negative, to provide actionable insights that could inform future policy decisions and operational practices. By taking a pragmatic stance, my study aimed to bridge the gap between academic research and the lived experiences of officers in the field.

I gathered the literature for my paper by conducting a search through the Justice Institute of British Columbia's (JIBC) online library database. I used the advanced search option and did

not limit my search to specific databases, aiming to explore all available resources. There were not enough resources specifically focused on my topic, particularly Canadian sources, which is why I broadened my search databases. However, the most relevant articles I found were from the “Criminal Justice Abstracts with Full Text,” “JSTOR Journals,” and “eBook Index” databases. Additionally, I utilized government reports and guidelines at both national and provincial levels, as well as the instructions of different police departments on using BWCs. I also used Google Scholar, as its smart search engine allowed me to enter my research questions directly to find relevant materials. Whenever I located an article using Google Scholar, I cross-referenced it with the JIBC library to ensure its reliability. The table in the appendix outlines the process I used to select the articles.

To assess the reliability, accuracy, and validity of the sources, I used the JIBC library's filtering tools to display only academic, peer-reviewed articles, ensuring that the information was credible and up to date. Reports and guidelines were sourced directly from government and official police department websites to maintain accuracy and authenticity. Additionally, I evaluated each source based on its publication date, the reputation of the journal or institution, and its relevance to my research questions. By applying these rigorous criteria, I ensured that the data and insights included in my study were both credible and directly aligned with my research focus.

I selected 40 articles for abstract review based on their relevance to my research topic. The primary reason for choosing these articles was their subject matter, as I believed the titles and topics gave a strong indication of whether the content aligned with my research focus. I also focused on articles that shared similar keywords to mine, ensuring they addressed the core concepts I explored, such as the operational impact of BWCs on police work. In addition, I

prioritized articles based on geographic relevance, focusing mainly on studies conducted in Canada, as they provided insights directly applicable to my context. However, due to the limited availability of Canadian studies, I included some U.S. articles that offered valuable perspectives. Furthermore, all chosen articles were peer-reviewed and published within the last ten years, ensuring that I reviewed recent, credible research.

After reviewing the abstracts of the 40 selected articles, I chose 25 for a final, in-depth review. The primary reasons for selecting these articles were their focus on the Canadian context and their direct relevance to my research topic. Since my study aimed to examine the effects of BWCs on the efficiency of police operations, these articles provided valuable insights into how BWCs impact policing tasks. They included studies that explored whether BWCs streamline policing by making operations more efficient or if they posed additional challenges by increasing officers' workloads. The selected articles offered a balanced view, presenting both the benefits and challenges of BWC implementation, which was crucial for the analysis in my research.

Finally, regarding ethical considerations, my research did not involve any primary data collection or direct interaction with participants, as it was solely based on secondary data. As such, there were no significant ethical issues to address. All data used were publicly available through academic, government, or official institutional sources, ensuring compliance with ethical research standards.

## **Results**

The findings from my study address the main question of whether BWCs enhance operational efficiency and accountability in policing or introduce challenges that might undermine their intended benefits. Through further exploration of the Canadian data and related

global findings, several key themes and new insights emerged. These findings offer a more nuanced understanding of the impacts of BWCs.

### **Enhanced Accountability but Limited External Transparency**

Research consistently supports the idea that BWCs can significantly promote accountability within police departments. Studies by Stanley (2015) and Ariel et al. (2020) provide compelling evidence that BWCs help reduce incidents of force and citizen complaints. This is largely due to the oversight they introduce, which encourages officers to maintain professional conduct. For example, Ariel et al. (2020) highlight a phenomenon known as the "civilizing effect," where officers may behave more appropriately when they know they are being recorded. This aligns with the hypothesis that BWCs can serve as effective tools for accountability within law enforcement.

However, the conversation about BWCs becomes more complex when we consider their limitations in terms of external transparency. Newer data, including findings from Guzik (2020), highlight significant barriers to public access to footage. This is where my discussion with Sgt. Ingram comes to mind. He vividly pointed out that while BWCs have the potential to record interactions that could foster public trust in police officers, the reality is much different. Footage captured by BWCs can not be shared with the public until a case is closed and, crucially, only with court permission. This process can take at least two years after an incident. By that time, the relevance and impact of releasing the footage might have diminished significantly, raising the question: does it truly help to enhance public trust (personal communication, Feb. 22, 2024)?

These restrictions mean that while BWCs may promote accountability internally, they often fall short in extending these benefits to the community at large. The lack of immediate access to footage limits the ability of the public to see and understand police actions in real-time.

As a result, the potential for BWCs to build trust in the police is significantly constrained. In essence, we may find ourselves in a situation where BWCs improve internal oversight but do not translate to external trust-building, leaving communities in the dark about police interactions that may have gone well or poorly.

### **Officer Perception and the Balance Between Surveillance and Efficiency**

The introduction of BWCs has sparked a lively debate among law enforcement officers about their roles, privacy, and how these devices impact morale and operational efficiency. Many officers see BWCs as tools that can enhance professionalism, but there are also mixed feelings about their use. For instance, research by Boivin and Gendron (2022) reveals that some officers view BWCs more as invasive surveillance devices than as mean of accountability. This highlights that not all officers are on board with BWCs, pointing to a crucial need for organizational support when it comes to developing and implementing BWC policies.

Interestingly, the concerns surrounding BWCs echo some of the broader discussions we have seen with surveillance technologies in crisis situations like Covid-19. Do Carmo Barriga et al. (2020) discuss how these technologies, while often justified for security reasons, can lead to unintended consequences. They emphasize that although surveillance can enhance security, it also raises valid concerns about privacy, changes in behavior, and the risk of long-term monitoring. In the case of BWCs, while they can boost accountability, they might also invade officers' autonomy and privacy.

We cannot ignore the psychological effects of being constantly monitored. Ariel et al. (2020) note that this kind of surveillance can create a sense of mistrust among officers. The feeling of being watched, not just by the public but also by their superiors, can weigh heavily on them. This pressure can lead to a phenomenon called "de-policing," where officers may slow

down their activities and engage less in proactive policing, opting instead to do the bare minimum. This parallels what we have seen during periods of heightened surveillance, where people may self-censor and limit their expressions (do Carmo Barriga et al., 2020). Officers under constant scrutiny might hesitate to dive fully into their roles, worried about potential backlash or negative evaluations.

However, some studies suggest that BWCs do not necessarily lead to this de-policing mindset. For example, evidence shows no significant difference in the number of traffic tickets issued by officers wearing BWCs compared to those who are not (Ariel et al., 2020). This implies that while BWCs might shape perceptions and morale, they do not automatically hinder police activity. In fact, the research indicates that officers can strike a balance between being accountable and maintaining operational efficiency, affirming that BWCs can enhance transparency without causing a drop in proactive policing. The real challenge is to ensure that BWCs are seen as supportive tools instead of mechanisms of control. It is essential for law enforcement agencies to foster an environment where officers feel valued and trusted, which can help mitigate the negative perceptions associated with surveillance.

### **Efficiency challenges and Procedural Impacts**

BWCs are often seen as a way to boost operational efficiency and accountability in policing. However, recent research has revealed some surprising trade-offs. Studies by Guzik (2020) and Sandhu and Simmons (2023) show that while BWCs can significantly improve report accuracy and help officers follow protocols, they also come with a heavy administrative burden. Managing, storing, and reviewing footage takes a lot of time and resources, which can pull officers away from the streets where they are needed most.



As Brown (2020) discusses, BWCs change the game in terms of police interactions. The increased visibility that comes with these cameras enhances accountability and can help build public trust. Officers often become more cautious and stick closely to procedures when they know they are being recorded. Interestingly, citizens tend to behave more cooperatively as well, aware that their actions are also under scrutiny.

Yet, the logistical hurdles cannot be ignored. The costs of buying and maintaining BWCs can be daunting, especially for smaller departments like those in Victoria and Montréal, which have pointed to these expenses as a major reason for not adopting the technology (Bailey, 2019; Valiante, 2019). Plus, the volume of video data generated creates its own set of challenges, requiring secure storage solutions and dedicated personnel to manage everything. This raises an important question: how can police departments leverage the benefits of BWCs without compromising their operational efficiency?

There are also valid concerns about privacy. Recording everyday interactions can lead to ethical dilemmas, particularly when sensitive situations are involved, and there is always the worry about how this footage might be misused (Ling, 2019). Operationally, rolling out BWCs can disrupt established workflows, necessitating training that can temporarily take officers away from their primary duties. As I see it, these privacy and operational concerns highlight the need for clear policies and protocols to guide the use of BWCs in a way that respects both public and officer rights.

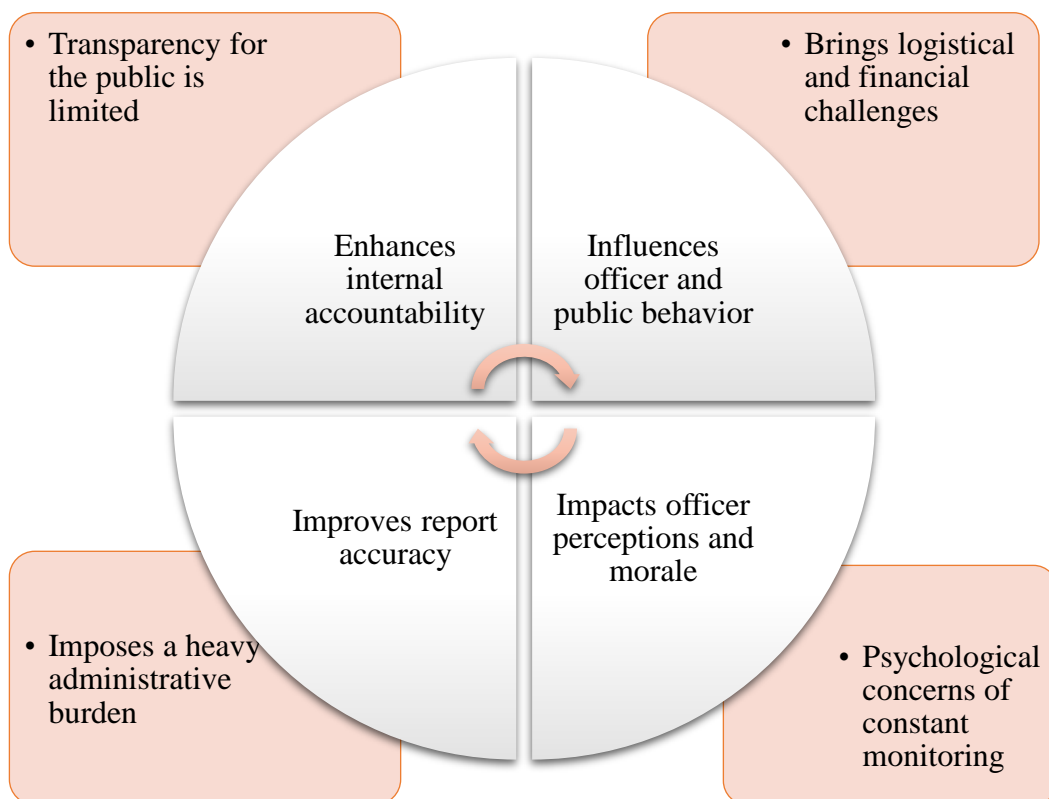
Adding to the complexity, some police agencies, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), have shown resistance to adopting BWCs. This reluctance often comes from fears about how effective these cameras really are and what impact they might have on officer conduct (Ling, 2019). Unlike the United States, where federal funding supports BWC

implementation, Canada has yet to provide the same level of financial and policy backing. This lack of support can leave many departments feeling hesitant to make the investment (Ling, 2019; Brown, 2019).

The findings explored in this section, including accountability, officer perceptions, procedural efficiency, and the logistical and ethical challenges associated with BWCs, are summarized in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Summary of Key Findings on BWCs*



*Note.* The central sections of the figure highlight the benefits of BWCs, and the orange sections on the outskirts illustrate the tradeoffs. This figure encapsulates the findings discussed in the results section, balancing the positive impacts with the challenges identified in the research.

## **Discussion**

This project brought both valuable insights and certain limitations to light in examining BWCs and their impact on policing. By reflecting on the resources, guidance, and data available, it became clear that while some aspects strengthened my research, others presented challenges or gaps.

### **Strengths of Research and Resources**

A key strength of my study was the interview with Sgt. Ingram, which served as a vital bridge between theory and practice. His firsthand experience not only clarified how BWCs function in the field but also revealed the daily realities and challenges that officers encounter when using this technology. His insights allowed a better understanding of the many effects of BWCs on officer behavior and decision-making, which are often presented in a very simple way in discussions that focus only on theory.

In parallel, the scholarly literature I reviewed contributed significantly to the research by providing a broader context for understanding BWCs. The academic articles, predominantly from U.S.-based research, offered detailed analyses of procedural justice, accountability, and the influence of BWCs on officer behavior. Although these studies were rooted in the U.S. context, they provided critical frameworks and comparative perspectives that enhanced the overall analysis. This combination of empirical evidence from the literature with the practical, on-the-ground insights from Sgt. Ingram allowed for a more comprehensive examination of the subject.

The combination of personal insights from the interview with the data and theories from the literature made the study stronger. It allowed me to look at the real-world impact of using BWCs from various perspectives. This well-rounded approach not only made the research more

credible but also pointed out the need for further studies, especially in Canada, where there is still much to learn about BWCs.

### **Limitations and Challenges**

Despite these strengths, there were still some challenges in the research process. The 14-week timeline, while typical for a semester-long assignment, felt a bit tight given the depth and scope of the topic. BWCs' effects on policing are complex, and having only a semester to cover such an expansive issue limited the amount of literature I could thoroughly review. With more time, I would have been able to explore additional perspectives and dive deeper into specific case studies.

Another major hurdle was the shift from student-style assignments to a professional-grade research paper. We had been using a more academic, student-oriented style, so adjusting to this higher, more formal standard was challenging and required a quick shift in mindset. Although I appreciated the chance to grow and take on a more polished approach, the transition definitely added a layer of pressure and complexity to the project.

Moreover, the lack of Canadian-specific research was a noticeable limitation. Unlike the United States, Canada has not fully embraced BWCs in its policing practices; the RCMP, for instance, has yet to implement them widely. This lack of adoption means Canadian research on BWCs remains limited, especially in terms of examining officers' personal experiences and perspectives. Most available studies tend to focus on public perceptions or organizational impacts, leaving a gap in understanding how BWCs affect officers on a day-to-day basis. Additionally, the few Canadian studies available often examine only pilot programs or preliminary implementations, which do not fully capture long-term impacts.

### **Reflections and Future Directions**

Looking back, if given the chance to do it over, I would prioritize conducting primary research to address these gaps, as the insights gathered from real officers' experiences would add depth and relevance to this research. Given the opportunity, I would conduct interviews with officers from a department like Delta Police, whose experiences would provide valuable qualitative data on the actual impacts of BWCs. Listening to officers' voices would help shed light on both the practical and personal challenges they face with this technology issues that are often overlooked in secondary research.

A qualitative approach like this would bring in perspectives that are often overlooked in the existing literature, especially from a Canadian viewpoint. By collecting personal accounts from officers, I could uncover valuable insights into how BWCs impact efficiency, specifically, how the administrative demands of managing and reviewing footage might take away from time spent in the field. This approach would also enable a more nuanced conversation about the costs and benefits tied to BWC adoption, which could help shape future Canadian policy decisions regarding their implementation.

### **Recommendations**

To bridge the knowledge gaps in the literature on BWCs and their impact on policing in Canada, there is a pressing need for a greater focus on Canadian law enforcement. While numerous studies from the U.S. shed light on the effects of BWCs, we need more research specifically examining how these cameras are used within various regions across Canada, particularly in departments that have already adopted this technology. Understanding the unique challenges and benefits that Canadian agencies face will help create a clearer picture of how BWCs fit into the local policing landscape.

A qualitative approach could also be invaluable for future research. By conducting interviews or surveys with police officers, we can capture their personal experiences with BWCs. This would not only reveal how BWCs affect their daily work but also clarifies the administrative responsibilities related to footage management and how those might impact the time officers spend on the streets. Officers are the ones directly affected by these tools, and their perspectives are crucial for a comprehensive discussion about the costs and benefits of BWC adoption.

In addition to operational efficiency and public accountability, it is important to investigate the impact of BWCs on officer well-being and job satisfaction. Future research should explore how being recorded affects officers' experiences on the job. Do they feel more stressed or anxious knowing they are under surveillance? Or do they find a sense of empowerment in their roles? Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing policies that not only improve accountability but also support the well-being of those serving on the front lines.

For police agencies contemplating the adoption of BWCs, implementing pilot programs with thorough evaluation components is crucial. These programs should assess not just whether BWCs enhance transparency and accountability but also how they impact officers' workflows and time management. Gathering feedback from officers involved in these trials will provide real-world insights that can help refine the implementation process. It is essential to strike the right balance between the benefits of BWCs and the practical challenges they present.

Clear policies and regulations surrounding the use of BWCs are fundamental for their successful integration into police work. Agencies should develop comprehensive guidelines that outline the protocols for recording, data storage, and public access to footage. These policies

should address privacy concerns and ensure that officers understand their responsibilities and the legal implications of using BWCs. By establishing clear parameters, law enforcement can foster trust among the community while safeguarding the rights of individuals involved in recorded interactions.

Finally, transitioning to a BWC-equipped environment brings its own challenges, making it vital for law enforcement agencies to invest in effective training programs to help officers adapt. These programs should cover everything from managing footage effectively to understanding the legal implications of recording. Ongoing support is also important as officers navigate this new technology. By equipping them with the right skills and knowledge, we can ensure that BWCs enhance public trust rather than create additional burdens.

These recommendations can work toward a more nuanced understanding of BWCs in Canadian policing. This effort will not only inform better policy decisions but also enhance the overall effectiveness of BWCs in fostering accountability and transparency within law enforcement.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, my research paper has explored the multifaceted implications of BWCs within the context of Canadian policing. While BWCs are often seen as a tool for enhancing transparency and accountability, the findings indicate that their implementation is not without significant challenges. Through a review of existing literature and analysis of the current landscape, it is evident that while BWCs can improve report accuracy and officer adherence to protocols, they also introduce an array of administrative burdens that can detract from officers' core responsibilities.

The insights gathered from experienced professionals, such as Sgt. Ingram, along with a wealth of research both from Canada and U.S. studies, have underscored the necessity for further exploration into the unique effects of BWCs on Canadian law enforcement. Despite the growing interest in this technology, a notable gap exists in the Canadian literature, particularly concerning officers' perspectives and the operational impacts of BWCs. My paper has highlighted the importance of qualitative research that captures the voices of officers, revealing how BWCs affect their day-to-day experiences and overall job satisfaction.

Moreover, clear policies and guidelines surrounding the use of BWCs are crucial for ensuring their successful integration into policing practices. As agencies navigate the transition to using BWCs, developing comprehensive training programs will be essential in equipping officers with the skills needed to manage this new technology effectively.

While BWCs present exciting opportunities for fostering accountability and improving procedural justice in policing, their implementation must be approached thoughtfully. Addressing the identified gaps in knowledge and policy will pave the way for a more informed and effective use of BWCs in Canada, ultimately enhancing public trust and the quality of policing.



### References

- Alda, E., & Dammert, L. (2024). The Effects of Body-Worn Cameras on Police Efficiency: A Study of Local Police Agencies in the United States. *International Criminal Justice Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10575677241229672>
- Ariel, B., Mitchell, R. J., Firpo, M. E., Fraiman, R., Hyatt, J. M., & Harinam, V. (2020). Does surveillance of officers lead to de-policing? *Police on Camera: Surveillance, Privacy, and Accountability*, 3.
- Bailey, I. (2019, November 7). B.C. establishes standards for police body cameras, but forces balk at high cost. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-bc-establishes-standards-for-police-body-cameras-but-forces-balk-at/>
- Boivin, R., & Gendron, A. (2022). An experimental study of the impact of body-worn cameras on police report writing. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 18(4), 747–764. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-021-09469-8>
- Braga, A. A., Sousa, W. H., Coldren, J. R., & Rodriguez, D. (2018). The effects of body-worn cameras on police activity and police-citizen encounters: A randomized controlled trial. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology (1973-)*, 108(3), 511–538. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48572874>
- Brown, G. R. (2020). Police body-worn cameras in the Canadian context: Policing's new visibility and today's expectations for police accountability. *Police on camera* (pp. 122–148). Routledge.
- Bud, T. (2016a). *The Rise of Body-Worn Camera Programs in Canada and the United States: An Extension of the Surveillant Assemblage*. Available from Criminal Justice Database.

- (1808229430). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/rise-body-worn-camera-programs-canada-united/docview/1808229430/se-2>
- Bud, T. K. (2016b). The rise and risks of police body-worn cameras in Canada. *Surveillance & Society*, 14(1), 117–121.
- Choi, S., Bitter, A. N., Sturges, H. A., & Snyder, J. A. (2024). Advancing the implementation of body-worn cameras: Using police officers' buy-in to inform research and policy. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 39(2), 422–433. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11896-023-09615-0>
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell J. D. (2018), *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Fifth edition. ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- do Carmo Barriga, A., Martins, A. F., Simões, M. J., & Faustino, D. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic: Yet another catalyst for governmental mass surveillance? *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 2(1), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2020.100096>
- Gaub, J. E., Choate, D. E., Todak, N., Katz, C. M., & White, M. D. (2016). Officer perceptions of body-worn cameras before and after deployment: A study of three departments. *Police Quarterly*, 19(3), 275–302. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1098611116653398>
- Goetschel, M., & Peha, J. (2017). Police perceptions of body-worn cameras. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 42(4), 698–726. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12103-017-9415-5>
- Guzik, K. (2020). Can we count on the police? Definitional issues in considering the promise of body-worn cameras to increase police accountability. *Police on camera* (pp. 64–79). Routledge.

Ling, J. (2019, July 15). As use of bodycams becomes common in U.S., most Canadian police forces – including RCMP – resistant. *The National Post*.

<https://nationalpost.com/news/as-use-of-bodycams-becomes-common-in-u-s-most-canadian-police-forces-including-rcmp-resistant>

Löfstrand, C. H., & Backman, C. (2021). Control or protection? work environment implications of police body-worn cameras. *New Technology, Work & Employment*, 36(3), 327–347. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ntwe.12201>

Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. (2015). *Guidance for the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement authorities: Document d'orientation pour l'utilisation de caméras corporelles par les organismes chargées de voir au respect de la loi*.

<https://canadacommons.ca/artifacts/1207452/guidance-for-the-use-of-body-worn-cameras-by-law-enforcement-authorities/1760558/>

Sandhu, A., & Simmons, J. S. (2023). Police officers as filmmakers: The cinematography of body worn cameras. *Policing & Society*, 33(5), 593–

603. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10439463.2022.2160450>

Saulnier, A., Bagg, J., & Thompson, B. (2021). Canadian policing and body-worn cameras:

Factors to contemplate in developing body-worn camera policy. *Canadian Public Policy /*

*Analyse De Politiques*, 47(2), 131–157. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27034147>

Stanley, J. (2015). Police body-mounted cameras: With right policies in place, a win for

all. *American Civil Liberties Union*, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/cnmcs-plcng/cn34517-eng.pdf>

Valiante, G. (2019, February 10). Montreal rules out body cameras for police, saying cost not worth results. *The Canadian Press*. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/montreal-rules-out-body-cameras-for-police-saying-cost-not-worth-results-1.4290330>

**Appendix**  
**Literature Search Process**

<b>Database</b>	<b>Search Term(s)</b>	<b>Search Results</b>	
<b>Initial Search</b>			
JIBC online library	body worn cameras AND (police officers OR law enforcement OR cops OR police)	2,227	
<b>Revised Searches</b>			<b>Reason for Revision</b>
JIBC online library	I kept the above keywords but I limited the results from 2014 to 2024 and only scholarly (peer reviewed) journals.	1,013	I needed updated articles and I wanted them to be peer reviewed ones.
JIBC online library	body worn cameras AND (police officers OR law enforcement OR cops OR police) AND (impacts OR effects OR consequences)	589	Added keywords “impacts OR effects OR consequences”
JIBC online library	body worn cameras AND (police officers OR law enforcement OR cops OR police) AND (impacts OR effects OR consequences) AND (tasks OR responsibilities OR activities)	123	Added keywords “tasks OR responsibilities OR activities”

JIBC online library	body worn cameras AND (police officers OR law enforcement OR cops OR police) AND (impacts OR effects OR consequences) AND (tasks OR responsibilities OR activities) AND (Canada or Canadian or Canadians or in Canada)	5	Added keywords  “Canada or Canadian or Canadians or in Canada”  to be more specific to Canada
------------------------	--	---	---

*Note.* This table shows the process I took to find the related literature. It shows how search results changed depending on the search terms used.