



San Diego Police Department

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PRESS RELEASE

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One Year Analysis of Body Worn Camera Use in three Patrol Divisions
Allegations and complaints are down, body worn cameras appear to de-escalate some situations, allowing officers to use lesser force options

San Diego, CA – The San Diego Police Department began deployment of body worn cameras to uniformed patrol officers at Southeastern, Central and Mid-City Divisions in July 2014. To date, 871 body worn cameras have been deployed Citywide.

This analysis was conducted after the first year of body worn camera use at the first three divisions. The analysis included; complaints against officers, use of force, assaults against officers, mental health calls for service, the impact of Proposition 47 and aggravated assault crimes. The data used for comparisons was from July 2013 - June 2014 versus July 2014 - June 2015.

The study showed in these three divisions citizen complaints decreased 23%, allegations decreased 44% and not sustained findings decreased by 84%. Not sustained findings are the least preferred finding, as this means no determination can be made on the allegation due to a lack of evidence. Body worn cameras have dramatically reduced the ambiguity of allegations and have improved our ability to make a conclusive finding on citizen complaints.

“Body worn cameras are a win-win for both our police officers and our community whom we so proudly serve,” said Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman. *“By removing the ambiguity and obtaining a definitive finding it only helps to maintain and build upon our public trust.”*

Feedback from officers wearing body worn cameras indicated the camera helped to de-escalate some situations resulting in the use of lesser controlling force. Our analysis revealed force used by officers at the three divisions showed greater controlling/defending force decreased by 8%, lesser controlling force increased by 17% and total force options used increased by 10%. This supports the feedback by officers showing lesser controlling force was used more often to gain compliance without the need for greater controlling/defending force, despite the increase in our overall count.

“Anytime we can de-escalate a volatile situation and minimize the force necessary to gain compliance, it is safer for everyone involved; our officers and our community,” said Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman.



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Lastly, the analysis showed assaults against officers at these three divisions increased by 36%. The data suggests we have not seen the same positive pattern in de-escalating situations in areas where there is a high volume for mental health calls for service, aggravated assaults or adult narcotics related bookings.

Although this is a one year analysis, we are cautious to draw any definitive conclusions. Further analysis and data collection will be conducted as we continue to expand our body worn camera program.

"After one year of use in the field, it's clear that body worn cameras have been a positive and productive tool for law enforcement," said San Diego Police Officers Association President Brian Marvel. *"Our officers believe the policies behind them treat both police officers and citizens fairly and ensure accountability on both ends. Our department and association are proud to have served as leaders with this new technology and we look forward to continuing to work with the department and community on constantly improving and refining this useful technology."*

"In the last few years I've seen an increase in Community Oriented Policing in our neighborhoods. It is about building bridges and creating relationships, making police a part of our community," said community volunteer Denice Gonzalez.

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