

Public Access to Body Camera Footage

This Listening Session does not cover the issue of who will have access to the body camera footage. This is because the issue is governed by state law and can only be altered by the Minnesota Legislature.

Body camera footage is currently public and governed by Minnesota Statute 13.82. This Statute only allows for a small number of exceptions to footage being public, including the identities of undercover police officers, victims of sexual assault, informants, and mandated reporters. Beyond these exceptions, body camera footage being public means that anyone can request the footage, receive it, and have no restrictions on how it is used.

Public access is a concern for community members who do not want their interactions with police to be publicly released, whether it is interactions in their home, at their work, when reporting a crime, or when engaged in criminal activity. It is also a concern for the Police Department, since requests for large amounts of footage are probable and their preparation and release will drain Department resources.

Last legislative session, a bill was proposed but failed to pass that would have classified body camera footage as private, with the exception of footage taken in public places, of a police officer using a deadly weapon or force that resulted in substantial bodily harm, which would remain public. Under the bill, footage deemed private would still be available to community members recorded in the video, just not other members of the public.

Though that proposed bill did not pass, there will likely be similar efforts in the future. If you are interested in expressing your views on how body camera footage should be classified, please contact your Minnesota legislators.

To find your district representatives, search by zip code at:

<http://www.gis.leg.mn/OpenLayers/districts/>

Or call: 1 (800) 657-3550