

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 3, 2023

Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee

TO Adam McGough (Chair), Cara Mendelsohn (Vice Chair), Tennell Atkins, Jesse Moreno, Jaime Resendez, Casey Thomas, Gay Donnell Willis

SUBJECT **Dallas Police Video Tagging (Categorization) Update**

To improve the operations of the Dallas Police Department, the Department routinely conducts audits to review processes, general orders, and procedures. A recent audit was conducted of the Department's video systems to determine if Departmental general orders regarding categorization and retention of dash and body camera videos were being followed. Although the result of the audit revealed that the Department was approximately 98% compliant, some deficiencies were discovered. The Department began the process to address these deficiencies, resulting in some media coverage of their efforts. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Public Safety Committee and City Council an overview and update to on efforts resolve deficiencies identified by the Department.

In November of 2022, an internal audit performed by the DPD Body Worn Camera Team of the Axon video system revealed that 89,000 videos (2% of the 3.8 million videos dating back to 2016) were not categorized. Of the uncategorized videos, 72,000 were from patrol and 17,000 were from the other work groups. This means the videos were not labeled properly among established call type categories: for example, a call for service, a specific incident, or traffic stop. As a result of the findings, DPD leadership distributed the list of uncategorized videos to unit commanders to have officers properly categorize the noted videos.

To date, the uncategorized number of videos is now down to 18,000. About 5,000 videos are created by Dallas police officers every day or approximately 150,000 every month. In General Order 332.00, recordings from body worn cameras (BWC) are to be categorized prior to the end of each shift. It is important to note that the uncategorized videos are not deleted by the system because they are not categorized or labeled properly. Instead, they are retained in the cloud storage platform because they do not have retention period set. However, they can be difficult to find at times, and categorizing the videos is important to ensure that videos can easily be found if needed. Videos are often generated during calls for service whether a criminal report is generated, or action is taken by the officer. Videos are also generated during administrative function checks of the officers' camera system, during other public service contact and a variety of other non-investigatory reasons. A part of the Department's review of the video system is to determine whether any of the uncategorized videos are related to criminal cases.

During the review, the Department found another deficiency regarding some older videos that *had been* properly categorized (tagged). Some videos, from 2016 through 2021, were removed as part of the normal retention cycle from the storage system prior to being submitted into a criminal case. During those years, the Department's video retention requirement was 90 days for videos categorized as a call for service, which was the minimum retention period set by state law. The Department will continue to coordinate with the District Attorney's office to review these instances and to assess any potential impact.

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In 2021, the Department expanded the retention requirements for video related to calls for service where a report was generated and that are categorized as Investigative Evidence. Now, these videos are retained for a minimum of 2 years making it easier for the detectives to build a case and hold on to the videos without them being removed as per the previous 90-day retention requirement. Additionally, the Department recently added staff to the Digital Media Evidence (DME) Team to help ensure compliance with the Richard Miles Act and that all other necessary video storage requirements and needs are met.

The following are steps the Department has taken or will soon implement to continue compliance of Departmental General Orders and Richard Miles Act requirements:

- The video retention storage period has been increased and the Department will research best practices among other law enforcement agencies to ensure appropriate retention cycles are established.
- Staffing in the form of a Digital Media Evidence team has been enhanced to help ensure videos and digital evidence are appropriately categorized and attached to investigatory cases if needed.
- Procedures to comply with General Orders will be reviewed to ensure patrol and investigation units are able to effectively meet established standards.
- Compliance work groups will be created in patrol and investigations divisions.
- A weekly report will be generated for supervisors to identify uncategorized videos.
- Additional training regarding the General Orders regarding video logging will be provided to officers.

Should the Public Safety Committee or City Council have any additional questions, please contact Executive Assistant Chief, Albert Martinez at (469) 890-9540.



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