



King County OLEO

Office of Law Enforcement Oversight

OCTOBER 26, 2022

Sent Via Email

Sheriff Patti Cole-Tindall
King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO)

Dear Sheriff Cole-Tindall:

In preparation for KCSO's implementation of body worn cameras in 2023, OLEO recommends that KCSO adopt a video release policy that promotes transparency, accountability, and consistency. The public has an interest in receiving accurate information in a timely manner, and KCSO has an opportunity to gain trust by delivering such information soon after a critical incident has occurred.

OLEO recommends that all video and/or audio recordings that depict a critical incident shall be publicly released within 72 hours of that incident. This timeline provides the community with swift access to information that often has grave impacts on specific individuals, families, and neighborhoods while allowing internal briefings to take place and an opportunity, prior to release, to notify and show the video to family members of any persons killed or injured during the incident. The timeline also allows investigators to interview involved and witness officers before they watch any recordings, which is an essential best practice in any investigation.

The 72-hour timeline should be strictly followed with limited rare exceptions, such as when the family of a person injured or killed by KCSO has not had an opportunity to view the video or when an involved officer is not able to timely provide a statement or interview due to a medical emergency—even then, the delay must be reasonable and definite.

Finally, the policy should account for recordings that KCSO cannot obtain within 72 hours by requiring that KCSO (1) inform the public by the 72-hour deadline of other recordings of which it has knowledge and (2) release such recordings as soon as practicable.

Sincerely,

Tamer Y. Abouzeid
OLEO Director