



Miami Civilian Board Finds that BWCs Clear Officers of Wrongdoing

A new report has found that Miami Police Department (MPD) officers **who wear body cameras are twice as likely to be cleared of misconduct complaints** and that the most common problem with the BWC is that the microphone is not being turned on.

The City of Miami's Civilian Investigative Panel (CIP), an independent oversight board, conducted the study. The panel's role overall is to examine citizen complaints against the police. In this report, the project analyzed 254 individual cases where 181 citizens made complaints about 199 officers with over 1,300 separate allegations. Of these 254 cases, the CIP team conducted an extensive review and found that the most reliable data were from 73 cases involving 66 officers, 71 complainants, and 122 allegations. The data covered the four-year period of 2018 to 2021.

Importantly, the report found that the exoneration rate of officers who used their

cameras properly was **double** that of officers who were not assigned BWCs. (In the Miami Police Department command staff, patrol sergeants and neighborhood patrol and support officers are not assigned cameras.) The CIP report found that in two out of three cases, officers were cleared of wrongdoing because the camera footage did not support a misconduct charge.

According to the report, BWCs have significantly increased the probability that a complaint will be closed on the merits. That is, it allows the CIP to make a clear determination of fact. This held true for both sustained allegations and exonerated allegations. The Chair of the CIP, Maithe Gonzalez, said, "BWC footage represents some of the most defining evidence in cases in which misconduct occurred and in cases in which the officer's actions were within the boundaries of the law and MPD departmental orders."

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From its review of the use of BWCs and the footage, the CIP team found that officers failed to comply with MPD policy with respect to when BWCs must be activated. **The highest occurring violation was 'improper muting' which made up 54% of the violations.**

The report (found [HERE](#)) recommended that the department assign BWCs to all officers, that MPD enforce its policy and re-train officers about when to mute their cameras, and to have supervisors conduct compliance audits.

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