

In-Car Cameras for Law Enforcement: The Role it Plays Enforcing Driving under the Influence Investigations

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Abstract

The paper describes the impact that in-car cameras have had on modern day policing and the communities they serve. The paper suggests that the number one reason an agency should endeavor to acquire in-car cameras is officer safety, and not to use the system as a “big brother” is watching you program. The effects of starting a program go far beyond just purchasing the system, but into what kind of support the company gives the agency after the purchase, officer training and “buy in” for the system, and how and where to store the evidence after it has been collected. A survey was sent out to agencies in the southeast portion of Florida. The agencies reported that they acquired their current in-car camera systems from grants or the vehicles are purchased with specific equipment already installed and the in-car camera in each vehicle is a required piece of equipment. Some agency members reported that they received minimal training in the operation of the in-car video system. The impact that the in-car camera system has had on the successful prosecution of driving while impaired cases seems to be significant, and the local state attorney’s seem to be in favor of having the video in order to successfully prosecute the cases. Officers have used the in-car camera system to self critique themselves and improve their tactics which leads to better officer safety techniques being used in the field. The officers also review the video evidence to better prepare their written reports and get exact quotes from suspects. This translates into a more professionally written report that is very detailed and looks professional. The bottom line is that the in-car camera system has improved the professionalism and performance of law enforcement officers.