

Fresno Police To Expand Body Camera Program

By Joe
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Fresno Police Headquarters (file photo)

Credit Joe Moore / Valley Public Radio

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The Fresno Police Department is moving forward with a plan to purchase 300 new body cameras for officers. The city council approved the \$2.5 million purchase today which also includes 400 TASER devices. The cameras are in addition to 100 purchased earlier this year after the city received an anonymous \$500,000 donation.

But the cameras won't always be recording video. Dyer says that while they can be an important tool, both with investigations and in building trust with the public, in some situations officers are advised to keep their cameras off. He points to several examples, including in hospital rooms and when talking to informants.

Dyer: "If somebody wants to contact an officer about a house in their neighborhood that is selling drugs, we don't want that on video, nor does the person reporting that, because it could interfere with the sharing of information."

He also says it's been important to get officers themselves to buy into the program, which thus far has been voluntary.

Dyer: "Now we do have officers coming in and asking for the cameras, so they can wear them, which is a good thing."

The department hopes to have all uniform personnel outfitted with the cameras by the end of the year.

