

# Findings of multi-year research project around body-worn cameras for rail staff

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In a first long-term initiative of its kind, train companies have joined forces to prove the effectiveness and promote the use of Body Worn Video (BWV) across the rail industry to improve staff and customer safety.

**Rail Delivery Group (RDG)** and **British Transport Police (BTP)** have concluded a multi-year research project with the University of Cambridge, exploring the positive impacts of staff using body-worn video equipment.

The key finding from almost five years of data is that Body Worn Video can reduce the likelihood of assault by almost half (47%), making it a crucial pillar of staff safety. By acting as a visible deterrent, cameras can stop assaults from taking place and prevent violence towards frontline staff across the railway.

While this equipment forms an important part of being able to investigate reports of assault against staff, it also has a powerful impact in stopping assaults from happening in the first place, by acting as a visible deterrent.

The research also showed that while cameras can't always stop assaults entirely, they do lead to a 30.7% decrease in severe injuries, and a similar decrease (30.5%) for low-level injuries.

Footage captured by cameras also has important benefits when it comes to securing justice for staff

who've been the victims of assault. British Transport Police prosecutors surveyed in the research reported that 67% found BWV footage useful in more than 60% of cases.

The rail industry's wider staff safety project has achieved significant advancements in promoting uptake of BWV technology with an additional 4,350 cameras having been rolled out already by rail companies between 2021 and 2023. The railway is projected to have over 12,200 cameras in operation by the end of January 2024, the majority of which will be used by multiple members of frontline staff.

The University of Cambridge's research amongst frontline rail staff showed that they overwhelmingly support the use of Body Worn Video, with 80% of respondents believing that train operators and Network Rail should roll out cameras fully.

Jacqueline Starr, Chief Executive, Rail Delivery Group, said: "Frontline rail staff provide all sorts of help and advice for our customers every day, and they should never face any kind of abuse.

"This technology is proven to be a powerful deterrent and with this rollout of body worn video across the railway we hope many more staff will benefit from this protection"

Assistant Chief Constable Charlie Doyle, British Transport Police, said: "Every member of rail staff and member of the public has the right to work and travel safely, and the impact the Body Worn Video project has had in keeping rail staff safe and prosecuting criminals cannot be understated.

"Body worn video helps to accelerate the judicial process for victims, provide transparency in cases and help rail staff in the many challenging situations they face every single day as well.

"We are dedicated to creating a hostile environment for criminals on the railways, and the continued rollout of BWV across rail operators can only further this ambition."

Staff safety is something that the railway takes extremely seriously and is constantly working to improve upon. Rail companies already have stringent measures in place aimed at preventing and addressing instances of violence and, together with BTP, support staff in securing justice when assaults do occur.

*Photo credit: Rail Delivery Group*