



Blanchester Police Department

Robert J. Houghton
Chief of Police

“The mission of the Blanchester Police Department is to be the Guardians of life, property, and the Constitutional Rights of all of our neighbors to ensure a safe and secure community”

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC RECORDS

Openness leads to a better-informed citizenry, which leads to better government and better public policy. It is the mission and intent of The Blanchester Police Department to at all times fully comply with and abide by both the spirit and the letter of Ohio’s Public Records Act. This policy was created in furtherance of the Village’s mission and is meant to serve as a supplement to the Ohio Public Records Act and all applicable Ohio law.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish rules and guidelines for the Blanchester Police Department when preparing video records for production or inspection.

PRODUCTION OR INSPECTION COSTS

On January 2, 2025, House Bill 315 was signed into law by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. The bill permits the Blanchester Police Department to charge for the “actual cost” of preparing a video record for production or inspection. The actual cost of preparation includes, but not limited to, all employee, contractor, or legal time and materials expended in retrieving, downloading reviewing, redacting, uploading, and producing the video record, including staff time, storage media, and a portion of necessary overhead expenses required to comply with the request.

The statutory term “a video record” for the purposes of this policy, means a video from one source for one start and stop recording. For example, three officers responding to an incident will each have “a video record” of that incident from each of their respective body cameras. This will result in an actual cost charge for each video record – in this example, three video records.

Per House Bill 315, The Blanchester Police Department may charge the requestor up to \$75 per hour for preparing the video footage (not to exceed \$750 total). A deposit of \$75 for the first hour is required, there is no prorated fee. Cash or check made out to the Village of Blanchester.

PREPAYMENT

The Blanchester Police Department will require a requester to prepay the actual cost of preparing a video record for production or inspection. The office will provide an estimate of the actual cost within five business days of receiving the request.

The office is not required to start preparing a video record for production or inspection until the requester pays the estimated actual cost in full. The office's obligation to produce a video record or make it available for inspection starts when the requester pays the estimated actual cost in full.

The office will notify the requester if the final actual cost is more than the estimated actual cost. The requester may be required to pay the difference between the actual cost and the estimated cost if (1) the requester is notified in advance that the actual cost is more than the estimated actual cost; and (2) the actual cost is less than twenty per cent more than the estimated actual cost. The requester will not be required to pay the difference in the actual cost and the estimated actual cost if the difference is more than twenty per cent.

WAIVER OF COSTS

The Blanchester Police Department will waive or reduce payment of the actual cost if either of the following apply:

- (1) The video or a portion of the video shows, communicates, or discloses any of the following:
 - a. The death of a person, or a deceased person's body, if the death was caused by a correctional employee, youth services employee, or peace officer;
 - b. Grievous bodily harm to a person if caused by a correctional employee, youth services employee, or peace officer; or
 - c. An act of severe violence against a person that results in serious physical harm to the person if caused by a correctional employee, youth services employee, or peace officer.
- (2) If, in the judgment of The Blanchester Police Department, the video or a portion of the video shows, communicates, or discloses information that is of great interest or importance to the general public.

RESPONSE TIME

Copies of video records must be produced within a reasonable period of time. Video records must be made available for inspection promptly. "Prompt" and "reasonable" take into account the time it takes the office to retrieve, download, review, redact, seek legal advice regarding, and produce the video record, as well as other facts and circumstances of the records requested. If the office requires the requester to pay in advance the actual cost of preparing a video record for production or inspection the office's obligation to produce a video record within a reasonable period of time, or make it available for inspection promptly, does not start until the requester pays the estimated actual cost in full. Video records will only be available for inspection during regular business hours.

MANAGING VIDEO RECORDS

The Blanchester Police Department's video records are subject to records retention schedules. The office's current schedules are available at 318 E. Main St. Blanchester, Ohio 45107, a location readily available to the public as required by Ohio Revised Code § 149.43(B)(2)