



WE ARE WATCHING YOU: The CCID has introduced body-worn cameras for officers as they patrol crime hotspots during the festive season. PICTURE: WILLEM LA

# CCID introduces body-worn cameras

## Entire incidents captured and recorded until switched off manually

### Staff Reporter

**C**APE Town's Central City Improvement District (CCID) has given new meaning to the expression "keeping a watchful eye" by introducing body-worn video cameras as a crime-prevention tool during the festive season.

The cameras are compact and "tough", with a series of features including recording and playback options.

The CCID plans to issue every on-duty public safety officer with the camera after it experienced a difference in combating crime during a two-month pilot period.

The chief operating officer of the CCID, Tasso Evangelinos, said the next phase will incorporate the addition of eight more units. This will bring the number of public safety officers who carry the cameras to 12.

Evangelinos said: "It is very easy to see an officer wearing a camera. It is mounted in full sight on the officer's uniform and also team members wear vests with the words 'CCTV Unit' on the front and back.

"The most important thing is that a camera unit can achieve behavioural change: people immediately become better behaved if they know they are being recorded – from members of the public to our officers.

"We have decided to introduce the units after many years of observing overseas

trends and researching the well-documented accounts of how effective these units have been in other countries. So far, we are the first city improvement district in South Africa to make use of the system."

The manager of safety and security for the CCID, Muneeb Hendricks, said. "Each camera records in high-definition quality, day and night, and has good sound recording capabilities as well. The cameras are activated by the user to record as soon as the possibility of an incident is detected. Each unit actually operates continually, even in stand-by mode, with a 20-second 'memory'. In other words, from the time it is activated by the user it has captured the last 20 seconds that occurred prior to the physical activation.

"In most cases where people record incidents on cellphones we are able only to see a situation once it has occurred, never what sparked the incident. These cameras are able to capture entire incidents and will record until switched off manually."

A Digital Evidence Management System was also bought to enable all footage at the end of each shift to be uploaded and stored to protect the chain of evidence.

Hendricks said: "While all footage captured at this point will remain the property of and in safekeeping with the CCID, we will make it available in criminal cases as required and it will be available to the City of Cape Town law enforcement agencies and the South African Police."