

Model Policy

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<i>Subject</i> Body Armor		
<i>Reference</i>		<i>Special Instructions</i>
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Reevaluation Date</i>	<i>No. Pages</i> 2

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide law enforcement officers with guidelines for the proper use and care of body armor.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this law enforcement agency to maximize officer safety through the use of body armor in combination with prescribed safety procedures. While body armor provides a significant level of protection, it is not a substitute for the observance of officer safety procedures.

III. DEFINITIONS

Field Activities: Duty assignments and/or tasks that place or could reasonably be expected to place officers in situations where they would be required to act in enforcement rather than administrative or support capacities.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Issuance of Body Armor

1. All body armor issued must comply with protective and related requirements prescribed under current standards of the National Institute of Justice.
2. All officers shall be issued agency-approved body armor.
3. Body armor that is worn or damaged shall be replaced by the agency. Body armor that must be replaced due to misuse or abuse by the officer shall be paid for by the officer.

B. Use of Body Armor

1. Officers shall wear only agency-approved body armor.

2. Body armor shall be worn by recruit officers during both classroom and field training.
3. Officers that are assigned to a uniformed function and non-uniformed sworn officers are required to wear body armor while engaged in field activities both on duty and during off duty employment unless exempt as follows:
 - a. When an agency-approved physician determines that an officer has a medical condition that would preclude wearing body armor.
 - b. When the officer is involved in undercover or plain clothes work that his/her supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor; or
 - c. When the department determines that circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor.

C. Inspections of Body Armor

1. Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring that body armor is worn and maintained as required by this policy through routine observation and periodic documented inspections.
2. Annual inspections of body armor shall be conducted for fit, cleanliness, signs of damage, abuse and wear.

D. Care, Maintenance and Replacement of Body Armor

1. Officers shall routinely inspect personal body armor for signs of damage and for general cleanliness.
2. As dirt and perspiration may erode ballistic panels, each officer shall be responsible for cleaning personal body armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Officers are responsible for the proper storage, maintenance and care of body armor in accor-

dance with manufacturer's instructions.

4. Officers are responsible for reporting damage or excessive wear to the ballistic panels or cover to their supervisor and the individual responsible for the uniform supply function.
5. Body armor will be replaced in accordance with guidelines and protocols established by the National Institute of Justice.

E. Training

The training officer shall be responsible for:

1. Monitoring technological advances in the body armor industry that may necessitate a change in body armor.
2. Assessing weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.
3. Providing training programs that demonstrate body armor's stopping power under actual firing conditions and that emphasize its safe and proper use.
4. Maintaining statistics on incidents where armor has or has not protected officers from harm, including traffic accidents.

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Every effort has been made by the IACP National Law Enforcement Policy Center staff and advisory board to ensure that this model policy incorporates the most current information and contemporary professional judgment on this issue. However, law enforcement administrators should be cautioned that no "model" policy can meet all the needs of any given law enforcement agency. Each law enforcement agency operates in a unique environment of federal court rulings, state laws, local ordinances, regulations, judicial and administrative decisions, and collective bargaining agreements that must be considered. In addition, the formulation of specific agency policies must take into account local political and community perspectives and customs, prerogatives and demands; often divergent law enforcement strategies and philosophies; and the impact of varied agency resource capabilities, among other factors.