

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

NO.40



Body Armor Mandatory Wear Policy

Date Issued June 28, 2011	Date Effective June 28, 2011	Revision No. 1	No. of pages 3
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1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide sworn members of the Worcester Police Department with guidelines for the proper use and care of body armor.

NOTE: Beginning in 2011, all officers receiving new body armor through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Program¹ must comply with this policy.

2. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Worcester Police Department 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.

3. 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.

Officers: As of 2011 all sworn Police Officers of the Worcester Police Department, regardless of rank who except body Armor through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP).

4. 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 (DOJ) or its' successor agency.
2. All officers shall be issued agency-approved body armor.
3. Body armor that is worn or damaged shall be replaced by the Department. 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. Officers that are assigned to the uniformed function are required to wear body armor during their shift while engaged in field activities. In addition, all officers must wear protective vests during high risk and/or tactical situations. Examples of "high risk" or "tactical"

¹ The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) **Program** reimburses up to 50 percent of the cost of each unit of eligible body armor purchased for law enforcement officers. In order to receive BVP funds, jurisdictions must certify, during the application process, that all law enforcement agencies benefitting from the BVP Program have a written be used "mandatory wear" policy in effect. This policy must be in place for at least all uniformed officers before any FY 2011 funding can be by the agency. The Worcester Police Department receives funds through this BVP Program.

situations include but are not limited to, search warrant executions, drug raids, initial crime scene response, and serving felony warrants.

3. It is highly recommended that all officers assigned to the Detective Division or while working 'road jobs', as defined in the respective labor contracts, wear body armor during their tour of duty. However, those officers in the Detective Division and/or working 'road jobs', where traffic control and direction is the primary responsibility, who choose not to wear their body armor must have it immediately available at all times during their shift and 'road job'. Immediately available means easily accessible.
4. Those uniformed officers assigned to administrative duties shall wear body armor when outside the confines of the Police Station.
5. However, there are Departmental exemptions 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 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. Inspection 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 at roll call and spot checks in the field.
2. Annual inspections of body armor shall be conducted for fit, cleanliness, and signs of damage, abuse and wear. This may be accomplished as part of annual firearms training.

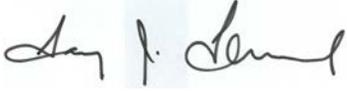
D. Care, Maintenance and Replacement of Body Armor:

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 accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
4. Officers are responsible for reporting damage or excessive wear to the ballistic panels or cover to their immediate supervisor and Training Division.
5. Body armor will be replaced in accordance with guidelines and protocols established by the National Institute of Justice.

E. Training:

1. The Training Division shall be responsible for:
2. Monitoring technological advances in the body armor industry that may necessitate a change in body armor.
3. Assessing weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.
4. Providing training programs that emphasize body armor's safe and proper use.
5. Maintaining statistics on incidents where armor has or has not protected officers from harm, including traffic crashes.

Per:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary J. Gemme". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name.

Gary J. Gemme
Chief of Police

GJG/sf