



Tulsa Police Department

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Policy # 205

Policy Name Body Armor

Approved by *Wendell Franklin, Chief of Police*

Effective Date 11/10/2020

Approved Date 11/06/2020

Previous Date 08/28/2011

PURPOSE OF CHANGE:

To update policy format.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Tulsa 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.

SUMMARY: The wearing of body armor is important to officer safety. Ballistic vests afford officers protection consistent with the threat to which officers are routinely exposed. This policy will provide guidelines for the proper use and care of body armor.

APPLIES TO: All police personnel.

DEFINITIONS:

AGENCY APPROVED BODY ARMOR – body armor that meets any National Institute of Justice (NIJ) threat level standard.

BODY ARMOR – An item of personal protective equipment that provides protection against specific ballistic threats within its coverage area. In this standard, the term body armor refers to that which provides coverage primarily for the torso.

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 take law enforcement action rather than administrative or support capacities.

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 in compliance with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) standards and the Collective Bargaining Agreement (Section 20.6).
3. Body armor that is worn or damaged shall be replaced by the agency. Body armor that must be replaced due to intentional 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 select classroom training and during all field training.
3. Officers that are assigned to a uniformed function and non-uniformed officers are required to wear body armor while engaged in field activities unless exempt as follows:
 - a. When the city physician or a personal physician determines 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 their supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor; or
 - c. When the department determines circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor. (i.e., Air Support, etc.)

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. Quarterly inspections done in September, December, March, and June shall include inspection of body armor for fit, cleanliness, signs of damage, abuse and wear. The inspection shall be documented on the Uniform/Vehicle Inspection Checklist.

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 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. ADMINISTRATIVE.

1. The Uniform Coordinator will monitor technological advances in the body armor industry that may necessitate a change in body armor.
2. The Range Master will continually assess weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.
3. The Training Division will provide training programs to the department that demonstrate body armor's stopping power under actual firing conditions and that emphasize its safe and proper use.
4. The Safety Committee will maintain statistics on incidents where armor has or has not protected officers from harm, including traffic accidents.

REGULATIONS:

1. Officers performing any patrol functions and/or field activities while in any Tulsa Police uniform, shall wear their agency issued or approved body armor.
2. During the service of any warrant, officers shall wear body armor regardless of specific assignment or attire.

REFERENCES:

Collective Bargaining Agreement (Section 20.6)

Uniform Specifications Manual

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Standard: 0101.06