
 <p>Cambridge Police Department</p>	POLICY & PROCEDURES		No. 171
	Subject/Title: Protective Body Armor		
	Issuing Authority: 	Review Date: June 16, 2011	Issue Date: July 1, 2011
	Robert C. Haas Police Commissioner	Effective Date: July 1, 2011	Rescinds: Policy #2004-3
References/ Attachments:		Accreditation Standards: 41.3.5 & 41.3.6	

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this directive is to establish the guidelines under which officers of this department will wear, possess, and care for department-issued protective body armor.

II. POLICY:

It is the policy of this department:

- Maximize the officer protection available through the use of body armor in combination with prescribed safety procedures; and
- Require that uniformed and non-uniformed officers wear soft body armor while engaged in field activities both on duty, during high-risk situations, and during certain extra-duty activities, e.g., overtime, firearms qualifications, certain type of training programs, etc., unless exempt by the provisions of this policy.

III. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES:

Soft, concealable body armor is designed to protect the wearer against projectiles fired by most handguns and shotguns. Its effectiveness depends upon the protection rating. Soft body armor is not designed to protect the wearer from medium to high power rifle projectiles.

Soft body armor may protect against improvised weapons, such as broken bottles, but is usually not effective against knives or ice picks unless it is designed, manufactured and rated as such. Sharp, pointed instruments used in a stabbing motion may penetrate body

armor and could deliver a fatal injury. Soft body armor may afford certain degree of protection to the wearer against slashing knife or sharp-edged weapon attacks. Such soft body armor may also afford some protection against any blunt force to the body.

Heavier body armor made of ceramic plates may protect against multiple impacts from rifle fire, but it is generally too heavy and inflexible to be worn during normal patrol duties and is generally relegated to special operations.

While body armor provides a significant level of protection, it is not a substitute for the observance of officer safety procedures and sound tactics. As a matter of practice, the department provides to its members an initial issue of protective body armor in the interests of maximizing officer safety and protection.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

- A. 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 activities.
- B. High-Risk Situations:** For purposes of this policy, high-risk situations would involve any situation or operation where there is a greater potential for officers to be confronted by a higher-risk of injury. High-risk situations would include, but not necessarily limited, to the following:
1. Pre-planned execution of an arrest or search warrant;
 2. Pre-planned tactical operations;
 3. Response to a crime in progress, such as a bank robbery, hostage or barricaded subject situation, or some other armed confrontation;
 4. Response to an active shooter situation, or a situation where officers are expected to conduct a search for potentially armed subjects; or
 5. Situations where there may be intelligence of subjects being armed or having a propensity for violence.
- C. Lightweight Protective Body Armor:** The terms “protective body armor,” “body armor,” or “soft body armor” are used interchangeably throughout this policy and are intended to mean the lightweight protective body armor that is issued to all sworn members of the Cambridge Police Department, as opposed

tactical body armor or other styles of protective body armor that is used for special purposes.

V. PROCEDURES:¹

A. Authorized Body Armor: The body armor will comply with protective and related requirements prescribed under current standards of the National Institute of Justice. Approved body armor, at the officer's option, may be either concealable or external armor (external wear must be in a carrier that is approved by the department).

B. Issuance of Body Armor: Regardless of whether or not body armor is worn regularly, each sworn employee shall have body armor available for wear.

1. *Initial Issue:* Upon being employed as a sworn police officer with this department and prior to working in the field, all sworn police officers shall be issued soft body armor, or at the very least an order will have been placed prior to their assignment to field activities.
2. *Replacement Issue:* The useful life of soft body armor that is worn regularly is approximately five years.
 - a. The department has established a rotational plan whereby soft body armor will be replaced relative to the five year serviceability of the body armor.
 - b. Any body armor that is damaged during the course of an officer's official duties will be replaced by the department, as promptly as possible.
 - c. Any employee requiring replacement of the body armor should make all such requests to the Commanding Officer of the Training/Certification Unit, preferably in writing (email is acceptable), making sure that his/her supervisory officer and commanding officer are copied on all such requests. The request should contain sufficient information as to the reason for the request and indicate the serviceability needing to be replaced.
 - d. The Commanding Officer of the Training/Certification Unit will be responsible for maintaining the rotational replacement schedule, and a record as to the date, manufacturer, style/model number, and other relevant information for each vest that is issued.

¹ CALEA Std. 43.1.5 – *The agency makes available protective vests for all sworn personnel and establishes written guidelines for the wearing and availability of those vests.*

C. Use of Body Armor: Depending upon an officer's duty assignment, personnel will be guided by the following provisions relative to the wear and accessibility of soft body armor:

1. *Student Officers:* Body armor shall be worn by student officers as specified by the Municipal Police Training Committee or other academy regulations.
2. *Uniformed Officers in Field Operations:* Officers who are assigned to a uniformed field operations function are required to wear body armor while engaged in field activities while on duty, unless exempted as follows:
 - a. When a Commanding Officer (rank of Deputy Superintendent or above) determines that circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor (e.g., extreme weather conditions), in which case officers are required to keep their body armor accessible when practical to do so; or
 - b. When an agency-approved physician determines that an officer has a medical condition that would preclude wearing body armor.
3. *Officers Assigned to Booking & Relief Duties:* Officers who are assigned to the booking area will be required to wear body armor while performing this function.
4. *Plain Clothed Officers in Field Operations:* Officers who are assigned to a non-uniformed assignment involving normal investigative functions in the field are strongly recommended to wear body armor while engaged in such duties. Any assignment that involves surveillance work, execution of a warrant, directed arrest activity, dignitary protection, or other active enforcement activity will be required to wear body armor while performing said duties, unless exempted as follows:
 - a. When the officer is involved in undercover or plain clothes work that his/her supervisor determines may potentially compromise the officer by wearing body armor (again, the supervisor needs to balance officer safety against the achievement of an enforcement objective);
 - b. When the department determines that circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor; or
 - c. When an agency-approved physician determines that an officer has a medical condition that would preclude wearing body armor.
5. *Accessibility to Body Armor While Working:* In such instances when body armor is not worn while the officer is engaged in field activities, the body armor must be immediately available to the officer, generally carried in the officer's vehicle with other equipment.

6. *Officers Performing Administrative Assignments:* Officers assigned to administrative duties are generally not required to wear body armor while performing those administrative duties. When officers performing administrative assignments are engaged in field activities, they are required to adhere to the standards set forth for uniform and plain-clothed while performing said activities. When not being used, body armor must be immediately available to the employee and may be stored in:
 - a. The officer's work area;
 - b. The officer's locker; or
 - c. The officer's vehicle.
7. *Officers Working Paid Details:* Although officers are not required to wear body armor while working paid details, they are strongly encouraged to do so. In any event, officers are expected to have their body armor available and accessible while working paid details in the event they are activated for an incident.

- D. Firearms Training:** All personnel who are involved training which involves the handling of loaded firearms shall wear body armor during such training. This would also include officers who might be handling or in the proximity of a firearm that is potentially loaded (e.g., processing a crime scene, test firing a firearm, etc.).
- E. High Risk Situations:²** Officers engaged in any high-risk situations or operations are required to wear soft body armor, at a minimum. A supervisory officer may at any time direct officers who are about to engage or respond to a situation that may be viewed as a potentially high risk situation require officers wear protective body armor.
- F. Inspections of Body Armor:** Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring that body armor is worn as required by this policy through routine observation and periodic inspections.
- G. Care and Maintenance of Body Armor:** Cleaning, maintenance and inspection of body armor is the responsibility of the officer to whom the body armor was issued.

² CALEA Std. 43.1.6 – A written directive requires the wearing of protective vests by personnel engaged in pre-planned, high-risk situations as defined by the agency.

1. Officers shall routinely inspect personal body armor for signs of damage or wear, and for general cleanliness. Unserviceable body armor shall be reported to the wearer's supervisor.
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. Any lost or stolen body armor is to be immediately reported to the officer's immediate supervisor, to be followed with a detailed report as to the circumstances under which the protective body armor went missing.