



BETHLEHEM POLICE DEPARTMENT

Body Armor	Related Policies:
<i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable New Hampshire Statutes:	
CALEA Standard: 41.3.5, 41.3.6	
Date Implemented: 06/2011	Review Date:

- I. **Purpose:** To establish policy regarding the use, control and care of issued body armor.
- II. **Policy:** It is the policy of the Bethlehem 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. The Department will provide body armor to each full-time police officer. The following procedures provide guidance in the use and care of the equipment.
- III. **Procedure:**
 - 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 will 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:** Officers are required to wear department issued body armor any time they are in uniform, unless specifically exempt by these regulations or granted temporary exemption by the Chief of Police. The following procedures will be adhered to:
 - 1. **Uniformed Patrol Officer:** All uniformed patrol officers will wear department issued body armor at all times while in uniform. While attending court in an off-duty capacity an officer may choose not to wear the body armor.
 - 2. **Detective / Plain Clothed Personnel:** Detective and plain clothed personnel will not be required to wear body armor at all times. When serving a search warrant, making arrests, or participating in high risk activity, those personnel will don their body armor. It is suggested



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that detectives and plain clothed personnel carry their body armor in an equipment bag to ensure that it is available when needed.

3. **Uniformed Administrative Personnel:** Uniformed personnel assigned to administrative duties that generally require them to remain in police headquarters may elect not to wear the body armor. However, when those personnel respond to any call for service or perform any normal patrol duties, they shall wear the body armor.
4. **Off-duty Personnel:** Off-duty personnel are not required to wear their body armor. However, if they choose to participate in any police activity, they must wear their body armor, just as they would if on duty.
5. **Specialized / Tactical Body Armor:** All personnel will wear their tactical armor when performing any high-risk activity. When police officers are wearing this type of armor, they will not be required to wear personal body armor. This section does not allow for uniformed patrol officers to substitute tactical armor for their personal body armor.
6. **Personally Owned Body Armor:** Officers may wear personally owned body armor if the body armor meets or exceeds the threat level of departmental issued 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 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 are responsible for the proper storage, security, maintenance, and care of body armor in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
2. Officers should routinely inspect personal body armor for signs of damage and for general cleanliness.
3. As dirt and perspiration may erode ballistic panels, each officer shall be responsible for cleaning personal 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.
5. Body armor will be replaced in accordance with guidelines and protocols established by the National Institute of Justice.