

FREDERICK POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

Section 9: Police Equipment and Vehicles
Topic: BODY ARMOR
Approved: 01/19/18
Review: Annually in November by Training Commander
Supersedes: G.O. 930 dated 07/06/16

Order Number: 930
Issued by: Chief of Police

.01 PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines pertaining to the use of body armor.

.02 CROSS-REF:

G.O. [1663](#), "Uniforms and Appearance"
FOP Contracts
CALEA STANDARD 41.3.5; 41.3.6

.03 DISCUSSION:

In providing protection to the public, members are often confronted with potentially hostile situations, including the use of deadly force. It is imperative that the Department take reasonable precautions to protect the safety of each member and those members themselves exercise due caution and good judgment in protecting themselves.

.04 POLICY:

1. It is the practice and policy of the Department to issue soft body armor to all sworn personnel and to require that it be worn while on-duty, including extra-duty employment, unless specifically exempted by this order or in writing by the Chief of Police. In all cases, sworn members who are not required to wear soft body armor will have complete soft body armor readily available to them throughout their tour of duty. Supervisors shall ensure that members are wearing departmentally issued soft body armor while on duty unless officially exempted.
2. Body armor is also available in other forms to personnel engaged in high-risk activities. It is the policy of the Department that all personnel use such armor in accordance with the procedures required by this Order and any other applicable General Orders, Standard Operating Procedures, or directives provided by superior officers.

.05 DEFINITIONS:

.10 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR:

1. The Department shall provide soft body armor with two (2) carriers to every sworn member of the agency. The two (2) carriers will be a concealable style and an outer uniform type or an outer tactical molle carrier. The armor (make, model, protective level, etc.) will be selected by the Training Unit Assistant Supervisor and approved via chain of command by the Chief of Police. All armor will comply with at least the current minimum protective standards prescribed by the National Institute of Justice .06 standard.
2. **MOLLE** (Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment) is used to define the current generation of load-bearing equipment utilized by law enforcement officers. The system's modularity is derived from the use of **PALS** (Pouch Attachment Ladder System) webbing as rows of heavy-duty nylon stitched onto the vest to allow for the attachment of various MOLLE-compatible pouches and accessories. This method of attachment has become a *de*

facto standard for modular gear. MOLLE allows an officer to remove issued equipment from the duty belt and evenly distribute it on the external vest carrier. The movement of equipment from the duty belt to the MOLLE carrier is intended to provide comfort by reducing weight and pressure on the officer's hips, and prevent long-term chronic back pain. Issued body armor will be replaced as recommended by the manufacturer. Issued body armor will be replaced as recommended by the manufacturer. Armor will also be replaced for damage, wear, etc. as indicated in this Order. Officers whose armor must be replaced due to loss, misuse or abuse will be responsible for reimbursing the Department for its replacement cost.

3. When body armor is replaced, the officer to whom it is assigned is responsible for storing the replaced armor as recommended by the manufacturer and by this Order. Such replaced armor will be maintained to serve as "emergency spare" armor in the event that the officer's primary armor becomes unserviceable and a new replacement is not immediately available.
4. While on-duty, including during extra-duty employment, officers will only wear the current armor which has been provided to them by the Department, unless an alternate armor has been specifically approved in writing by the Firearms Coordinator.

.12 MOLLE CARRIER REQUIREMENTS

1. Officers who elect to wear the MOLLE carrier will only wear the Department approved pouches listed below. Officers will be responsible for the purchase of their pouches. Officers can purchase the pouches from any vendor, as long as they are the same as the items below (with product number):
 - A. Black - Protech Tactical OC Spray Pouch (TP13)
 - B. Black - Protech Tactical Baton/Flashlight (TP14)
 - C. Black - Protech Tactical Side Arm Double Mag (TP10A)
 - D. Black - Protech Tactical 4" x 8" Utility Pouch (TP19A)
 - E. Black - 5-11/VTAC Radio Pouch (Style# 58718)
 - F. Black - 5-11/VTAC Cuff Case (Style# 58721)
2. Officers who utilize a MOLLE carrier will be REQUIRED to have the following items on their MOLLE carriers:
 - A. Protech Tactical OC Spray Pouch (TP13)
 - B. Protech Tactical Baton/Flashlight Holder (TP14)
 - C. 5-11/VTAC Radio Pouch (Style #58718)
 - D. Protech Tactical Side Arm Double Mag (TP10A)
 - E. "Police" patches (Front and back)
 - F. Name tape
 - G. Badge patch

3. Officers who utilize a MOLLE carrier has the option to wear the following items either on their MOLLE Carrier (otherwise they continue to utilize their duty gear for the items below):
 - A. 5-11/VTAC Cuff Case (Style #58721)
 - B. Protect Tactical 4" x 8" Utility Pouch (TP19A)
 - C. Tourniquet
 - D. E-Collar controller (K9 handlers)
4. No other pouches, patches, or equipment are authorized to be worn on the MOLLE carrier.
5. The MOLLE carrier will not be worn without the required pouches and patches.
6. Officers may utilize MOLLE Carriers with the Patrol uniform; bicycle/hot weather uniform; or any plain clothes assignment with the permission of their supervisor.
7. Supervisors are responsible for inspecting officers to ensure that only approved pouches, patches and equipment are worn.

.15 MANDATORY WEARING OF BODY ARMOR:

1. Officers shall wear their current issued soft body armor at all times while on-duty and in uniform, including while on extra-duty employment, unless exempted as indicated below.
2. On-duty officers who are not in uniform shall have their soft body armor readily available for use. Such personnel shall wear soft body armor whenever engaged in pre-planned high-risk activities specific to their assignment. Examples of high-risk situations would include: suspects with a history of weapons offenses or physical assaults; known substance abusers; emotional unstable suspects; raids; search warrant executions; manhunts; building searches; crowd control; dignitary protection; stakeouts, assignment to arrest teams, etc.
3. The Chief of Police may exempt sworn personnel from wearing body armor as follows:
 - A. When a Department-approved physician determines that an officer has a medical condition that would preclude use of body armor. The physician shall provide a written explanation for the exemption to the Chief of Police, who, after review, shall forward the exemption to the Commander of the Support Services Division for inclusion in the member's medical history file and to the member's supervisor. This may preclude an officer from certain assignments and details.
 - B. When an officer is involved in undercover or plainclothes assignment that his supervisor determines would be compromised by use of body armor.
 - C. When an officer is assigned to perform an administrative function.
 - D. In an emergency, a command staff member may temporarily exempt an officer from wearing soft body armor. Extended exemptions must be obtained in writing from the Chief of Police. Whenever an exemption is made, an administrative report from the command staff member shall be made through the chain of command explaining why the exemption was made.

.20 INSPECTIONS OF BODY ARMOR:

1. Supervisors shall ensure that their personnel are wearing their body armor daily during their roll call inspection. Their documented monthly inspection will include reference to the wearing of soft body armor.
2. Formal inspections of soft body armor will take place on a quarterly basis. This inspection will be done during in-service training and will be conducted by the Training Unit Assistant Supervisor or their designee. Inspections will be documented on the "Frederick Police Department Ballistic Vest Inspection Sheet" which will be electronically filed.
3. Officers shall inspect their vest for damage or excessive wear prior to each use.
4. During any inspection, if the vest appears unsafe to wear, the vest will be removed from service, the subordinate will be provided a temporary replacement vest, and the vest and a written report will be forwarded by the inspector to the Training Unit Assistant Supervisor. If the Training Unit Assistant Supervisor determines if the vest requires repair or replacement, the Commander of the Support Services Division will be contacted and the appropriate action undertaken.

.25 CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF BODY ARMOR:

1. Each officer is responsible for the proper storage, cleaning, and maintenance of his assigned body armor as recommended by the manufacturer. The panels are NOT to be washed/dried in a machine or dry cleaned.
2. When vests are worn, a tee shirt shall be worn as a barrier to protect against chafing and perspiration. Although the outer layer of the body armor is treated with a moisture-resistant material to withstand normal wear in rain, officers should not keep the body armor in high humidity or rain for long periods of time. The body armor shall not be left lying unprotected inside of an automobile, stored in a locker room, or left exposed to sunlight for extended periods of time. It is preferable that soft body armor be stored flat.

.30 INCIDENTS INVOLVING BODY ARMOR:

If a vest is struck by gunfire or another significant force (edged weapon attack, blunt force attack, automobile accident, etc.), the wearer of the vest shall report to the hospital as soon as possible, even if they feel no ill effects or no injury is recognizable. The incident will be documented by the wearer in an administrative memo. The vest will be removed from service, the officer will be provided with a temporary replacement, and the vest and the memo forwarded to the Training Unit Assistant Supervisor for inspection and appropriate action.

.40 SPECIALIZED BODY ARMOR:

Units which utilize additional types of body armor (tactical armor, ceramic plates, shields/bunkers, etc.) will develop standard operating procedures governing the use of such armor. The requirements of these specialized procedures will be in compliance with all of the requirements of this General Order.