



# POLICY & PROCEDURE

## PORTAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **BODY ARMOR UTILIZATION**

SCOPE: All Sworn Personnel  
DISTRIBUTION: Policy & Procedures Manual

REFERENCE:

NUMBER: 6.04  
ISSUED: 05/08/2023  
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 RESCINDS  
 AMENDS  
WILEAG 5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION  
STANDARDS: 6.1.7

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Policy & Procedure is to ensure that all sworn personnel of the Portage Police Department have body armor and also requires that body armor is worn by personnel involved in agency defined high risk situations.

This Policy & Procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. BODY ARMOR

### I. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the Portage Police Department to maximize officer safety through the use of body armor in conjunction with the practice of prescribed safety procedures. While body armor provides a significant level of protection, it is not a substitute for sound, basic safety procedures.

### II. BODY ARMOR

#### A. Issuance of body armor

- 1. Newly hired officers shall receive department issued NIJ approved level IIIA or Level II body armor with their uniform unless they prefer to use previously purchased body armor that is less than five years old and is approved by the chief.
  - a) The under the uniform vest carrier must be black or navy in color, if visible when worn with an open collar.

- b) Officers may prefer to wear an authorized over the uniform shirt vest carrier approved by the chief of police.
- 2. All body armor issued by the department will comply with the current minimum protective standards prescribed by the National Institute of Justice and should afford protection consistent with the threat to which officers are exposed.
- 3. The department will replace body armor that is five years old or damaged in the line of duty.
- 4. Body armor that must be replaced due to misuse, neglect or abuse by the officer shall be paid for by the officer.
- 5. All issued body armor is the property of the department. Officers shall turn in their old body armor at the time new body armor is issued and upon terminating employment with the department or released to another agency per hiring agreement.
- 6. The department will maintain records documenting at minimum, officer name, issuance date, body armor ballistic level, body armor manufacturer and body armor serial numbers.
- 7. Replaced body armor and tactical vests can be utilized for training purposes, donated to other agencies with approval from the Chief of Police and/or designee, or destroyed.

B. Use of body armor

- 1. Department issued body armor shall be worn immediately upon issuance.
- 2. Both uniformed and non-uniformed officers are required to wear the department issued body armor at all times while engaged in field duties on duty unless exempted as follows:
  - a) When the officer is involved in undercover or plain-clothes work that a supervisor determines would be compromised by the wearing of body armor.
  - b) When the officer is assigned to perform an administrative function or duty such as conducting administrative presentations.
  - c) When the officer is assigned to a classroom training session.
  - d) When a physician determines that an officer has a medical condition that would preclude wearing body armor.
  - e) When the department determines that circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor.

3. Command officers and officers assigned to administrative duties will have the option of not wearing their body armor while on duty; however, they must have their body armor immediately accessible.
  - a) Body armor that is not worn must be carried on duty and must be properly encased, maintained, and secure so that it is immediately accessible, if needed.
  - b) Body armor will not be stored in department vehicles from work shift to work shift unless that vehicle is primarily used by one officer.
  - c) Body armor shall be worn by all sworn personnel engaged in pre-planned, high risk situations.
    - (1) High-Risk-Assignments are defined as tasks that place, or could reasonably be expected to place, officers in high risk situations where they would be required to act in enforcement rather than administrative or support capacities. Examples of high-risk field activities include, but are not necessarily limited to search warrants, high-risk arrests, high-risk surveillance, active shooter situations, hostage/barricaded subject situations and crowd control.

#### D. Inspection of body armor

1. Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that department issued body armor is worn and maintained as required by this policy.
2. Officers shall be responsible for regular inspection of their department issued body armor for fit, cleanliness, signs of damage, abuse and wear.

#### C. Care and maintenance of department issued body armor

1. Each officer is responsible for the proper storage of body armor in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and daily inspection for signs of damage and general cleanliness.
2. Since dirt and perspiration may erode ballistic panels, each officer shall be responsible for cleaning their body armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Officers should check with the manufacturer to ensure that spray deodorants do not adversely affect the ballistic panels.
3. Officers are responsible to replace worn body armor carriers as a part of regular uniform maintenance.
4. Officers are responsible for immediately reporting damage or excessive wear to the ballistic panels, or cover, to their supervisor.

#### D. Training

1. The department shall be responsible for maintaining the following information:

- a) Training programs that inform the officers about body armor and emphasize its safe and proper use.
- b) Technological advances in the body armor industry that may necessitate a change in body armor.
- c) A description of weapons and ammunition currently in use, and whether or not issued body armor can withstand their impact.

### **Bulletproof Vest Grant Acts of 1998 and 2000**

When applicable, department tactical body armor should be purchased utilizing this grant.

*The Bulletproof Vest Grant Acts of 1998 and 2000 assist, units of local government, and Indian tribes, in obtaining funds to purchase ballistic and stab vests for their law enforcement officers. Any vest purchased after March 1, 1999 that meets applicable National Institute of Justice standards is eligible for funding, using an electronic, Internet-based application and payment request process. The entire process of obtaining federal funds is completed through the following web site: <https://vests.ojp.gov/index.html>.*

The chief or designee will review the department body armor database and determine which officers are eligible for replacement vests. In January of each year, the chief or designee will complete the application for reimbursement. The chief or designee will maintain a copy of this application and related communications.

In addition, a copy of the approved grant application will be forwarded to the City of Portage Finance Division.

Keith J. Klafke  
Chief of Police

This Policy & Procedure cancels and supersedes any and all written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

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