



MIDDLETON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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POLICY
6.1.07

SUBJECT: **Body Armor**

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MRR

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to establish that protective vests will be made available to all sworn personnel and, with limited exceptions, to require their use.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Middleton 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.

DEFINITIONS

Body Armor

Body armor is a vest whose material affords ballistic protection and which may or may not accommodate inserts.

Immediately Available

Immediately available means wearing body armor or having it close and accessible so it can be donned at a moment's notice. Accessible means in assigned work vehicle, or if assigned inside a building, in the officer's locker, work area or assigned work vehicle.

PROCEDURE

Issuance of Body Armor

Properly fitted Threat Level IIIA personal body armor will be issued by the Department to each sworn officer. (Officers may choose to wear their personal body armor in an approved exterior carrier.) In addition, each squad car has been equipped with supplemental Threat Level IV body armor. Body armor will comply with the current minimum protective standards prescribed by the National Institute of Justice. Body armor that is worn, damaged or expired will be replaced by the Department.

Use of Body Armor

Plainclothes, Administrative, and Support Personnel

All on duty sworn personnel shall have body armor immediately available to them.

All sworn personnel, uniformed and plainclothes, involved in the incidents listed below shall wear body armor:

1. Where officers believe that an individual may use a firearm.
2. Search warrants, arrest warrants and known felony arrest situations, where the suspect is not in custody.
3. Any high risk situation including active shooters, barricaded suspects, acts of terrorism, violent civil unrest, hostage situations, suicidal subjects, and felony stops.
4. A supervisor may require an officer to wear a vest in situations not addressed above.

Uniformed Personnel

All uniformed sworn personnel, regardless of rank, title, or position, assigned to the field whose primary duties include answering calls for service, responding to emergency calls or taking enforcement actions; or who are responsible for an immediate response in an emergency will wear their body armor. Uniformed sworn personnel not meeting these criteria will have their body armor immediately available while on duty, including officers assigned inside duties.

Supplemental Body Armor

Supplemental Threat Level IV body armor in a tactical carrier holding additional patrol rifle magazines have been placed in of each squad car. To permit consistent quick access, supplemental body armor should be stored in the rear cargo area, in the approved container, absent special circumstances. Where the patrol rifle is stored in the trunk of an unmarked squad, the supplemental body armor may also be stored in the trunk. Supplemental body armor should be worn over the uniform/personal body armor, and is expected to be used when the officer is involved in a high risk call or situation.

Training

Body armor shall be worn by all personnel during any training exercise involving firearms, for all range activities, and during weapon cleaning or maintenance.

Exceptions

Officers are exempt from wearing body armor for the following reasons:

1. When the officer is involved in undercover or plain clothes work that his/her supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor.
2. When the Department determines that circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor.

Care, Maintenance and Replacement of Body Armor

Officers shall routinely inspect personal body armor for signs of damage and for general cleanliness. 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. Officers are responsible for the proper storage, maintenance and care of body armor in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. 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.

It is recommended that, to ensure optimal performance, a vest that experiences average wear should be replaced approximately every five years.