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| Protective Body Armor | Related Policies: |
| *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.* |
| Applicable KY Statutes:  |
| OSHA: |
| NFPA Standard: 1500, Ch. 7.1.1 and 8.10.11 |
| Date Implemented: | Review Date: |

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the care, use, and maintenance of protective body armor.
2. **Policy:** In accordance with NFPA 1500, the fire department shall provide each member with protective clothing and protective equipment that is designed to provide protection from the hazards to which the member is likely to be exposed and is suitable for the tasks that the member is expected to perform. Body armor has been proven to provide an effective means to protect the wearer from blunt force trauma, sharp objects as well as gunshot wounds. Protective body armor, shall be utilized only by members who are trained and qualified to use such equipment.
3. **Definitions**

**Protective Body Armor:** An item of personal protective equipment that provides protection for the torso against specific ballistic threats.

1. **Guidelines for the Care, Use and Maintenance of the Protective Body Armor**
2. The care, use and maintenance of protective body armor shall be in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
3. All protective body armor shall meet or exceed National Institute of Justice NIF 0101.06 requirements.
4. Body armor shall be correctly fitted to each member using such PPE following the manufacturer's recommendations and shall not be used beyond the manufacturer's warranty period.
5. As with any type of personal protective equipment, personnel shall not utilize body armor or bullet proof vests if they have not been trained in its use and limitations.
6. Personnel shall not wear improperly sized, ill-fitting, or damaged protective body armor.
7. Personnel without body armor are strictly prohibited from exposing themselves to situations where its use is required, and are required to remain in secure areas at incident scenes, including in staging areas and/or in vehicles.
8. All questions on the care, use and maintenance of protective body armor shall be referred to the fire department safety officer.

**Editor’s Note:** Many police departments assign matters associated with body armor to the police armorer, who through training and experience develop a level of competence in body armor like that developed in the fire service by SCBA technicians. When circumstances permit, it may be advisable to have the police armorer handle fire department body armor as well.

1. **Use of Protective Body Armor**
2. Personnel should wear body armor anytime they feel it is necessary.
3. Body armor shall be worn when dispatched to the following incidents:
4. Any incident where it is reported that shots have been fired, persons have been shot or stabbed, or a weapon is involved;
5. Any civil disturbance;
6. Any reported suicide where the means involve the use of a weapon or are unknown;
7. Any SWAT standby or police situation involving violence;
8. Any domestic violence, family dispute or address that has been identified as a concern for such;
9. Any incident that may potentially involve an explosive device, including a suspicious package, bomb threat, etc.;
10. Any time deemed necessary by the IC or officer in charge of unit responding.

 **Note:** This list is not intended to be all inclusive.

1. Personnel dispatched to the above types of incidents shall don protective body armor prior to entering the affected area and shall wear said PPE until all potential threats have been mitigated by law enforcement.
2. The wearing of protective body armor shall not relieve personnel from the requirement that they stage or remain in a secure area of the incident scene until informed by law enforcement that the scene is secure.
3. The protection offered by protective body armor depends in part upon concealment of the vest so an attacker cannot purposely aim at or attack an unprotected area of the body. Whenever possible the vest should be covered by a shirt, jacket, EMS coat, or firefighting turnout coat.
4. When not in use protective body armor shall be properly secured to prevent theft.