

October 21, 2011

**CITY OF FERGUSON  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE**

**Index as:**

Ballistic Vest

Body Armor

Bullet Proof Vest

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**SOFT BODY ARMOR USE**

217.00 PURPOSE

The Ferguson Police Department recognizes the dangers adherent to the job of Police Officer. In our concern for the well being of our personnel, we issue equipment to provide for the safest possible working environment. This equipment includes ballistic body armor. This policy outlines the requirements for its use.

217.01 POLICY STATEMENT

The paramount concern of the Ferguson Police Department is the safety of our personnel. Although there are specific exemptions to the mandatory use of body armor, the Ferguson Police Department strongly encourages its Officers to wear the department issued body armor at all times while on duty, in uniform, for their personal protection.

217.02 REQUIREMENTS

- A. All Police Officers shall wear Department issued body armor while on duty in uniform or while working approved secondary employment in uniform unless exempted below:
  - 1. The Chief of Police must be provided with a written statement from a physician indicating that officer has a medical condition that would preclude the use of body armor on a mandatory basis. This exemption is then subject to review and approval by a department approved physician.
  - 2. The Police Officer is assigned to an Administrative duty, is attending a funeral, is in uniform making a public appearance, is on court or official ceremony duty, or during other special assignments as determined by the Officers immediate supervisor.
- B. All Police Officers participating in the execution of a search warrant, assigned to a stakeout, or when wearing a raid jacket shall wear department issued body armor.

**217.03 MAINTENANCE OF BODY ARMOR**

- A. Body armor will be maintained in a clean, sanitary condition. Damage or other problems will be reported to the Commander of the Division of Field Operations. The proper care of present day body armor includes precautions when cleaning the garment. Every garment should have a label with instructions on how to clean the components. Follow these instructions, and make sure that any other person who might clean your garment is also aware of correct cleaning procedures (i.e., spouse, etc.). Most armor should be hand washed in hot water with any mild home laundry detergent.
- B. **NEVER FOLD BODY ARMOR FOR STORAGE.**
- C. **NEVER DRY BODY ARMOR ON AN OUTDOOR CLOTHESLINE, EVEN IN THE SHADE.**
- D. Each time that body armor is washed, it should be inspected for any signs of wear. If it appears that the thread used to sew layers together is wearing badly, or if there is evidence that the fabric is unraveling, the ballistic vest should be returned to the manufacturer for repair. Officers should never attempt to repair body armor themselves under any circumstances.

**217.04 BALLISTIC LIMITS OF BODY ARMOR**

Body Armor will only protect you to the ballistic specifications or lesser as listed by the body armor manufacturer. It should be understood that the term "lesser" does not include weapons such as knives or ice picks. These are not lesser weapons, but rather **A DIFFERENT TYPE OF WEAPON ALTOGETHER** and body armor should not be expected to protect against them.

**217.05 REPLACEMENT OF BODY ARMOR**

- A. Every set of armor will eventually have to be replaced for one reason or another. Since no two sets of armor are exposed to identical wear or care, it is unreasonable to expect each set of soft body armor to "wear out" in exactly the same period of time.
- B. Bodies can and do change significantly over the years, and armor that is properly sized when purchased may no longer fit.
- C. The physical condition of individual armor may also influence the decision to replace. Stains or discoloration of the ballistic panels may be evidence of exposure to bleach, excessive sunlight, or chemicals that could reduce the ballistic resistant properties of manufacturer recommendations concerning the necessity of replacement.
- D. Should it be determined that body armor has deteriorated due to officer's neglect, that officer will be held responsible to replace body armor at his/her own expense. It

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should be understood that body armor is the property of the Department, used and cared for by the officer it is issued to.

<u>217.06 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR</u>
The Commander of the Division of Field Operations will maintain accurate records for all body armor in inventory for the purpose of determining which body armor was issued to each officer together with the name of the manufacturer, model number, and date of issuance.

#### 217.07 DISPOSING OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

When soft body armor has reached the end of its useful life and is no longer serviceable, the Department will dispose of it in a manner that will prevent inadvertent use. Current body armor will not burn, so incineration is not possible. It is also difficult to cut. As a result, it must be disposed of intact, relegated to landfill burial. Body armor should not be sent to a public, uncontrolled landfill.

#### 217.08 WHEN AN OFFICER IS SHOT

Any officer shot while wearing armor should receive a medical examination as soon as possible. Even though the officer shows no after effects other than soreness or a bruise, the possibility of serious internal injury exists and should be evaluated by medical personnel. The ballistic vest receiving impact will be seized and replaced with a new set.

This order replaces Policy Order P-10-06.

By order of:



COLONEL THOMAS JACKSON  
Chief of Police

#### Distribution

All Department Personnel