



CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

BODY WORN BALLISTIC ARMOR

GENERAL ORDER: 06.02

CREATED: May 6, 2016

ISSUE DATE: October 1, 2022

ACTION: Re-numbers general order dated May 13, 2016.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2022

06.02.0 **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish departmental policy on the use and care of wearable ballistic armor.

06.02.1 **POLICY**

It is the policy of Concord Police Department to enhance the physical safety of officers through the use of ballistic armor in conjunction with established safety procedures.

The Concord Police Department makes every attempt to provide equipment designed to improve the safety of all officers. In the course of their professional duties, police officers are exposed to a risk of assault by firearms, particularly handguns (including their own). One of the most effective safeguards available against such threats is the use of wearable ballistic armor. While ballistic armor provides a significant level of protection, it is not an absolute protection against all threat levels, and is not a substitute for sound officer safety tactics and practices.

06.02.2 **DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions are for the limited purposes of this General Order and may not apply in all other cases:

- A. Concealable Ballistic Armor: Bullet resistant material designed for daily wear under the uniform shirt or outer clothing, and which has been issued or approved for use by the department.
- B. Tactical Ballistic Armor: Ballistic armor offering a higher level of threat protection and which is issued to members of SWAT for use in high risk or tactical operations.

06.02.3 **ISSUANCE OF BALLISTIC ARMOR**

- A. Every sworn officer shall be issued concealable ballistic armor that complies with standards established by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). All issued ballistic armor shall conform to the level of threat protections required to defeat the issued handgun ammunition fired from the duty weapon.

- B. Concealable ballistic armor and carriers that are worn or damaged through normal wear or use shall be replaced or repaired by the department. It is the responsibility of the officer to report any damage or excessive wear of the ballistic panels or carrier to the appropriate supervisor.
- C. Any unit of ballistic armor that has been fired upon, punctured, stabbed, cut, or otherwise structurally damaged shall be immediately removed from use and replaced.

06.02.4 PRIVATELY OWNED BALLISTIC ARMOR

- A. An officer may elect to purchase and wear privately owned ballistic armor provided that the armor meets or exceeds the rated threat level and specifications of the issued ballistic armor and has been inspected and approved for use by the department.
- B. Replacement and/or repair of privately owned ballistic armor will be the personal responsibility of the purchasing officer.
- C. An officer who elects to use privately owned ballistic armor must comply with the requirements of this General Order as if the armor was issued by the department.

06.02.5 WEARING OF BALLISTIC ARMOR

- A. Officers shall wear the issued ballistic armor at all times while on duty except when 06.02.5 (C) applies.
- B. All officers, regardless of assignment or rank, are required to wear ballistic armor when working in uniform in any secondary employment capacity.
- C. It is encouraged that all officers wear ballistic armor; however officers will not be required to wear ballistic armor when:
 - 1. Working in an authorized covert capacity that may be compromised by the wearing of ballistic armor; OR
 - 2. The ambient air temperature and/or level of humidity during a scheduled tour of duty poses an elevated risk of heat related injury; OR
 - 3. The officer is assigned to the Administration Bureau, Major Crimes Division, East/West Investigations, or is a member of the Executive Staff. Officers who choose not to wear their protective vest must have it readily available during their tour of duty; OR
 - 4. The officer has an approved medical exemption granted by the Chief of Police.
- D. Every officer, regardless of assignment or rank, shall wear department approved ballistic armor when participating in live fire training exercises, organized raids, pre-planned warrant executions involving dynamic or forcible entry, civil disturbances, tactical operations, and other high risk operations as directed by the controlling supervisor.

06.02.6 **MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS**

- A. Any officer seeking a medical exemption to the mandatory wear of ballistic armor shall obtain a detailed written justification from a medical doctor that describes the physical condition and how the condition prevents the wearing of ballistic armor. The justification shall be forwarded to human resources so the Chief of Police or his/her designee can consider the exemption request.
- B. The Chief of Police or his/her designee may require a second medical evaluation through a physician identified by Concord Police Department for confirmation that the ballistic armor cannot be worn. If it is determined that the officer's medical condition is such that prohibits the wearing of ballistic armor, then the officer may be referred to a physician identified by Concord Police Department for a "Fitness for Duty" evaluation.

06.02.7 **TACTICAL BALLISTIC ARMOR**

- A. Tactical ballistic armor is issued to members of SWAT in order to provide them with higher levels of threat protection during high-risk tactical operations. Officers assigned to SWAT are required to wear tactical ballistic armor during all field deployments and during any training exercises involving the use of firearms, distraction devices, less lethal projectile munitions, breaching rounds, or explosives. The SWAT Commander(s) may exempt wear of tactical ballistic armor for officers based on assignment and/or circumstances (i.e. assignment as sniper, woodland operation, surveillance operation, etc.)
- B. The SWAT Commander(s) and Team Leader(s) shall be responsible for determining the tactical ballistic armor requirements of the department and for ensuring that assigned personnel are properly trained in its use and maintenance.
- C. Any unit of tactical ballistic armor that has been fired upon, punctured, stabbed, cut, or otherwise structurally damaged shall be immediately removed from use and replaced.

06.02.8 **INSPECTIONS OF BALLISTIC ARMOR**

- A. Support Services Division shall be responsible for inspection of ballistic armor at department firearms qualification. The inspection shall include an assessment of fit, cleanliness, and signs of damage, abuse, or need for repair or replacement.
- B. The SWAT Commander(s) and Team Leader(s) shall be jointly responsible for conducting periodic inspections of tactical ballistic armor issued to SWAT. Results of the inspections will be reported to the Support Services Division.
- C. Support Services Division shall maintain documentation of inspections in the department records management system.

06.02.9 MAINTENANCE AND DISPOSAL OF BALLISTIC ARMOR

- A. Each officer is responsible for the proper care and maintenance of ballistic armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. This includes regular inspection of the armor for signs of damage and general cleanliness.
- B. Any loss or theft of departmental ballistic armor shall immediately be reported in writing to the appropriate supervisor.
- C. Dirt and human perspiration may erode ballistic panels and form odor-causing bacteria. Each officer shall be responsible for properly cleaning issued ballistic armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to ensure that it remains clean and odor free.
- D. Surplus ballistic armor shall be disposed of in a manner that does not render it available to the general public. If suitable alternatives are not available for recycling or donation to other agencies for legitimate purposes, surplus ballistic armor shall be destroyed. Disposal and destruction of departmental ballistic armor must be approved in advance by the Chief of Police.

06.02.10 TRAINING AND EVALUATION

- A. Support Services Division shall be responsible for maintaining the following:
 - 1. Information on technical advances in the wearable ballistic armor industry or changes in NIJ specifications that may indicate a need to upgrade or replace ballistic armor.
 - 2. Documentation verifying that the issued ballistic armor conforms with current NIJ specifications and is rated for the threat level posed by the ammunition used in the issued duty weapon.
 - 3. Procurement records, armor identification, and issuance data enabling the department to track the age of the units and effect the programmed scheduled replacement of used ballistic armor in advance of the manufacturer's warranty expiration date.
 - 4. Information and statistical data needed to evaluate occurrences where issued ballistic armor has protected or failed to protect officers in accordance with its rated threat protection level.



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CHIEF OF POLICE