

Uniforms & Equipment



Body Armor

Order
06.106

A. Policy

It is the policy of the Tempe Police Department to maximize employee safety through 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 proper safety procedures.

B. Definitions

1. Field Activities: Duty assignments or tasks that place or could reasonably be expected to place officers in situations where they would be required to act in enforcement rather than administrative or support capacities.
2. Officer: For the purpose of this policy, officer refers to sworn Police Officers and Detention Officers.

C. Procedures

1. Eligible Employees

Employees in the following workgroups are eligible for body armor issuance:

- a. Sworn Police Officers
- b. Detention Officers
- c. Community Responders
- d. Crime Scene Specialists
- e. Any other workgroup(s) or employee(s) determined by the Chief of Police.

2. Issuance of Body Armor Allowance

- a. All employees in eligible workgroups shall receive a body armor allowance when initially hired and periodic replacement (every five (5) years)

throughout their employment with the Department.

- b. OMBR will notify employees in July of the fiscal year their body armor is due for replacement. Employees notified of their replacement eligibility are required to purchase new body armor during the fiscal year (July – June) in which they were notified.
 - 1) A predetermined amount for body armor purchases will be established each fiscal year and the amount may be obtained through the Office of Management, Budget & Research (OMBR).
 - 2) Any cost exceeding the designated amount must be paid by the employee at the time of purchase and may be reimbursed through uniform reimbursement in accordance to [Order 06.105 Uniform Reimbursement](#).
 - 3) New police officer recruits must obtain prior approval from the Training Unit Sergeant before purchasing body armor.
- c. Employees may acquire body armor through designated vendors contracted with the City and those vendors will bill the City directly.
- d. Employees who elect to purchase body armor through a vendor not contracted with the City will be required to pay for the armor at the time of purchase and may then request reimbursement through OMBR.
 - Employees may not submit a receipt for payment without having actually paid for the body armor.
- e. All body armor purchased must meet or exceed the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) minimum threat level HG2 (formerly referred to as Level IIIA).
- f. All body armor purchased must additionally be rated to stop all handgun duty ammunition currently issued by this Department.
 - 1) Coordination will be made between the Firearms Training Unit (FTU) and vendors contracted with the City to ensure they are in compliance.
 - 2) If an employee chooses to use a vendor not contracted with the City, it is the employee's responsibility to coordinate between the vendor and FTU to ensure compliance.
- g. Body armor that is damaged in the line of duty shall be replaced by the Department.

- h. Body armor that must be replaced due to misuse or abuse by the employee shall be paid for by the employee.
- i. Upon separation from the Department, body armor purchased through OMBR (not through uniform reimbursement) within five (5) years will be turned in with other issued equipment.

3. Use of Body Armor

- a. Employees shall wear only Department-approved body armor.
- b. Officers assigned to a uniformed function and non-uniformed sworn officers are required to wear body armor while engaged in field activities both on-duty and during off-duty employment unless exempt as follows:
 - 1) When a Department-approved physician determines an officer has a medical condition that would preclude wearing body armor.
 - 2) When the officer is involved in undercover or plain clothes work that his/her supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor; or
 - 3) When the Department determines that circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor.
- c. Plain-clothes officers must have their body armor readily available should they be required to wear their uniform.

4. Inspections of Body Armor

- a. Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring body armor is working and maintained as required by this policy through routine observation and periodic documented inspections.
- b. Annual inspections of body armor shall be conducted for fit, cleanliness and signs of damage, abuse, and wear.

5. Care, Maintenance and Replacement of Body Armor

- a. Employees shall routinely inspect personal body armor for signs of damage and for general cleanliness.
- b. As dirt and perspiration may erode ballistic panels, each employee shall be responsible for cleaning personal body armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

- c. Employees are responsible for the proper storage, maintenance, and care of body armor in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- d. Employees are responsible for reporting damage or excessive wear to their supervisor and OMBR.
- e. Body armor will be replaced in accordance with guidelines and protocols established by the NIJ.

6. Training

- a. The Training Unit shall be responsible for monitoring technological advances in the body armor industry that may necessitate a change in body armor; and
- b. Assessing weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.