I. POLICY

It is the policy of this Department that uniformed officers assigned to regular patrol wear a ballistic vest. Plainclothes officers are required to have a ballistic vest readily available and, when initiating enforcement action, are required to wear that vest, whenever reasonably possible.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Definitions and Standards

1. Ballistic Vest - A ballistic vest is a complete manufactured product item which consists of front and back ballistic panels meeting performance standards. Vests worn by sworn personnel must minimally meet standards and include side coverage. All vests shall be of the correct size and fit for the wearer’s body, as defined by the vest manufacturer.

2. Enforcement Action - Any deliberate action on the part of a peace officer to detain or arrest an individual.

3. Readily Available - This term means direct access to the ballistic vest, although the degree of access depends on the action to be taken. Storing a vest in an assigned police vehicle is sufficient for having the vest be immediately available.

B. Uniformed Personnel

All uniformed officers assigned to regular patrol shall wear a ballistic vest.

C. Sworn Plain Clothes Officers

All on-duty sworn personnel shall have a ballistic vest readily available. Such personnel should make every effort to don their vest prior to taking enforcement action, while not jeopardizing their safety in the process and in due consideration of the given situation. Exceptions are listed in II.D below.

D. Exceptions

1. It is not the intent of this policy that ballistic vests be worn while attending court, training, funerals, formal dress occasions, meetings, or while conducting administrative duties, unless otherwise directed by a superior.

2. Operatives in undercover operations are specifically exempt from this policy.

3. Off-duty officers who invoke their police powers individually under unplanned emergency situations are exempt from this policy.
4. All officers assigned to a task force operation where the task force regulations are stricter than this policy shall abide by that task force policy. Officers permanently assigned to task forces (i.e. Task Force) may be directed by task force management to abide by that unit’s ballistic vest wearing policies.

E. Vest Replacement

All sworn officers will at all times maintain their vests in a serviceable condition, as determined by manufacturer’s standards, and repair or replace their vest when it is appropriate to do so.

F. Vest Purchase Program

Under the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program, funding is available to reimburse the Department 50% of the purchase price of a qualifying vest. Officers wanting to purchase a vest under this program must contact the budget manager, who will coordinate all vest purchases. The member shall pay 50% of the purchase price of the vest prior to making any purchase. The Department will pay the other 50% and when the vest is received the Department will seek reimbursement from the Department of Justice.

The vest purchase program is in effect only as long as the federal Bulletproof Vest Partnership funding is available, and/or at discretion of the Police Chief. If the Bullet Proof Vest program is discontinued by the federal government, or at discretion of the Police Chief, sworn officers will be expected to fully purchase their own vests, pursuant to the current M.O.U.

This program is available to sworn officers only. The Department will provide vests at no charge to uniformed civilian personnel, at the discretion of the Police Chief. Each vest must complete the manufacturer’s recommended lifespan before the officer can reapply for another 50% vest purchase. This requirement can be waived at the discretion of the Police Chief.

When the officer separates from Department, the vest will either be returned to the department or ownership retained by the officer, at the officer’s discretion. A record of this disposition will be kept by Administration.

Darren Pytel
Police Chief

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12/11 Parking Enforcement not required to wear or have vest.
07/12 NIJ 0101.04 performance standards added
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