

Body Armor

1012.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide deputies and correctional officers with guidelines for the proper use of body armor.

1012.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office to maximize deputy and correctional officer safety through the 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 safety procedures.

1012.3 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR

The Training Academy Director shall ensure that body armor is issued to all deputies and correctional weapon officers and that, when issued, the body armor meets or exceeds the standards of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ 0101.06).

Body armor shall be issued when a deputy begins service at the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office and shall be replaced when the body armor expires or is so severely damaged that the functionality has been compromised. Body armor shall be issued when a correctional officer is assigned as a correctional weapons officer.

1012.3.1 USE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

Generally, the use of body armor is required subject to the following:

- (a) Deputies and correctional weapon officers shall only wear agency-approved body armor.
- (b) Deputies shall wear body armor anytime they are in a situation where they could reasonably be expected to take enforcement action.
- (c) Deputies may be excused by the Sheriff or the authorized designee from wearing body armor when they are functioning primarily in an administrative or support capacity and could not reasonably be expected to take enforcement action.
- (d) Body armor shall be worn when a deputy is working in uniform
- (e) Deputies and correctional weapons officer shall wear body armor when taking part in agency range training.
- (f) Correctional weapons officers shall wear body armor anytime they are armed with a firearm.
- (g) A deputy may be excused from wearing body armor when he/she is involved in undercover or plainclothes work that the Sheriff or the authorized designee determines could be compromised by wearing body armor, or when a supervisor determines that other circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor.

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1012.3.2 INSPECTIONS OF BODY ARMOR

Supervisors should ensure that body armor is worn in accordance with this policy through routine observation. Annual inspections of body armor should be conducted by each assigned deputy or correctional weapons officer for fit, cleanliness and signs of damage, abuse, and wear.

1012.3.3 CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

Soft body armor should never be stored for any period of time in an area where environmental conditions (e.g., temperature, light, humidity) are not reasonably controlled (e.g., normal ambient room temperature/humidity conditions), such as in automobiles or automobile trunks.

Soft body armor should be cared for and cleaned pursuant to the manufacturer's care instructions provided with the soft body armor. The instructions can be found on labels located on the external surface of each ballistic panel. The carrier should also have a label that contains care instructions. Failure to follow these instructions may damage the ballistic performance capabilities of the armor. If care instructions for the soft body armor cannot be located, contact the manufacturer to request care instructions.

Soft body armor should not be exposed to any cleaning agents or methods not specifically recommended by the manufacturer, as noted on the armor panel label.

Soft body armor should be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended replacement schedule.

1012.4 ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Training Academy Director or the authorized designee should:

- (a) Monitor technological advances in the body armor industry for any appropriate changes to agency-approved body armor.
- (b) Assess weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.
- (c) Provide training that educates deputies and correctional weapons officers about the safety benefits of wearing body armor.