


Lakefield Police Department Policy

	SUBJECT: Body Armor		POLICY NUMBER 1004
	Reference(s): IACP Model Policy Body Armor		EFFECTIVE DATE June 7, 2021
Reference(s): IACP Model Policy Body Armor		APPROVED BY: Lakefield City Council	ENACTED DATE: June 7, 2021

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to specify agency, leadership, and officer responsibilities related to body armor.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this law enforcement agency to maximize 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 officer safety procedures.

III. DEFINITIONS

Body Armor: An item of personal protective equipment intended to protect the wearer from threats that may include ballistic threats,¹ stabbing, fragmentation, or blunt impact.² Body armor generally consists of two armor panel or plates, a front and a back, placed in a carrier.

Carrier: A garment whose primary purpose is to retain the armor panel(s) or plate(s) and to provide a means of supporting and securing the armor panel(s) or plate(s) to the wearer.³

Field Activities: Duty assignments and/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 roles.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Selection of Body Armor Protection Level

The agency shall assess the ballistic threats of concern to officers, including their service weapons, and select an appropriate level of protection.⁴

B. Issuance and Replacement of Body Armor

1. Every officer shall be issued agency-approved body armor that complies with the appropriate protective and related requirements.⁵

¹ Ballistic threats refer to dangers from projectiles, such as bullets.

² ASTM E3005, *Standard Terminology for Body Armor* (West Conshohocken, PA: ASTM International, 2015), www.astm.org.

³ ASTM E3005, *Standard Terminology for Body Armor*.

⁴ U.S.-based readers, please refer to the current National Institute of Justice (NIJ) standard at www.policearmor.org.

⁵ For example, see those requirements prescribed by the National Institute of Justice Body Armor Compliance Testing Program at <https://www.nij.gov/topics/technology/body-armor/Pages/testing.aspx>.

2. The agency shall specify requirements for the carrier that is part of the agency-approved body armor.
3. Every officer shall be individually measured and fitted for body armor.⁶
4. Body armor that is damaged shall be replaced in accordance with established guidelines and protocols.⁷
5. Body armor that has reached the end of its warranty period should be replaced in accordance with established guidelines and protocols.

C. Use of Body Armor

1. Every officer shall perform a personal armor fit assessment upon receipt of body armor and shall report any issues to his or her supervisor and other designated agency individuals, as applicable.⁸
2. Officers shall wear only agency-approved body armor and shall wear both panels in an agency-approved carrier.
3. Recruit officers shall wear body armor during both classroom, range activities, and field training.
4. Officers assigned to a uniformed function and non-uniformed sworn officers shall wear body armor while engaged in field activities both on duty and during off-duty employment unless the officer is involved in undercover or plainclothes work that his or her supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor.
5. Officers not engaged in field activities shall have their body armor available at the location of their principal assignment.

D. Inspection of Body Armor

1. Every officer shall routinely inspect personal body armor for signs of damage and for general cleanliness.
2. Annual inspections of body armor shall be conducted for fit, cleanliness, and signs of damage.
3. Each officer shall be responsible for reporting damage or excessive wear to the ballistic panels or carrier to his or her supervisor and the individual responsible for the uniform supply function.

E. Care and Maintenance of Body Armor

Officers are responsible for the proper storage, maintenance, cleaning, and care of body armor ballistic panels and carriers in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

F. Supervision

Supervisors shall ensure that all officers comply with this policy, including ensuring that body armor is worn and maintained as required by this policy through routine observation and periodic documented inspections.

G. Training

1. Each officer shall receive initial training on body armor.⁹

⁶ For an example of sample requirements, please see those specified in ASTM E3003, *Practice for Body Armor Wearer Measurement and Fitting of Armor*.

⁷ See www.policearmor.org for more information.

⁸ See ASTM E3003, *Practice for Body Armor Wearer Measurement and Fitting of Armor*.

⁹ See www.policearmor.org for more information.

2. The training officer or other agency-designated individual shall be responsible for
 - a. ensuring officers are properly trained on body armor fit and coverage, use, care, and maintenance; and
 - b. providing training programs that demonstrate body armor's stopping power under actual firing conditions and that emphasize its safe and proper use.
3. This individual shall also be responsible for
 - a. monitoring technological advances in the body armor industry that may necessitate a change in body armor;
 - b. assessing weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats; and
 - c. maintaining statistics on incidents where armor has or has not protected officers from harm, including motor vehicle crashes.

Every effort has been made to ensure that this document incorporates the most current information and contemporary professional judgment on this issue. Readers outside of the United States should note that, while this document promotes procedures reflective of a democratic society, its legal basis follows United States Supreme Court rulings and other federal laws and statutes.