




**Division of State Patrol
Policy and Procedure**

Number
11-29

Subject MANDATORY WEAR OF BALLISTIC VESTS	
Author/Originator Bureau of Field Operations	Approved by  Superintendent
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I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Division of State Patrol (DSP) to establish guidelines regarding the mandatory wear of Division-approved ballistic vests/body armor.

II. BACKGROUND

It is in the interest of DSP to maximize officer safety and enhance the protection of its sworn employees by requiring them to wear ballistic vests/body armor while conducting law enforcement activities. Such utilization of ballistic vests/body armor in combination with following prescribed safety procedures by sworn employees has been determined to be a reasonable and prudent approach to accomplish this effort. The nature of law enforcement activities has historically involved a risk of being engaged by adversaries with firearms.

III. OBJECTIVE

The key objective of this policy is to provide DSP sworn personnel with clear guidance concerning when approved ballistic vests/body armor must be worn.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Administrative duties** – duties conducted by sworn personnel when civilian attire, as described in Division Policy and Procedure (P&P) 11-19 is worn, or while in uniform when substantially removed from public.

- B. **Ballistic Vest** – body armor which is in compliance with protective and related requirements prescribed under current standards of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) or its successor agency/organization. NOTE: **The tactical plate carrier with armored plates shall not be an authorized substitute for the ballistic vest.**
- C. **Exterior Vest** – agency-approved body armor that is designed to be worn on the outside of the uniform.
- D. **On-Duty activities** – activities performed while in uniform or as part of a “tour of duty” and include those occasions when an employee is performing under his or her statutory police powers, or is in uniform, even though the employee may not be compensated.
- E. **Other Vest** – Body armor not issued but approved in writing by DSP.
- F. **Substantially Removed from Public** – refers to geographic or other physical areas where access by civilians is restricted/controlled.

V. PROCEDURE

- A. All sworn officers shall wear the issued ballistic vest or other approved vest while in uniform and on-duty. The wear of Division-issued ballistic or other Division-approved vests is optional as follows:
 - 1. Sworn personnel are performing administrative duties or are substantially removed from contact with the public in an enforcement capacity.
 - 2. The Superintendent or his/her designee determines that circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate that personnel wear a ballistic vest.
 - 3. The Office of the Academy will determine if wear of ballistic vests by personnel is appropriate for training conducted at the Academy.
 - 4. A reasonable accommodation approved by the Bureau of Human Resource Services (BHRS) is on file with the Division.
 - 5. Sworn personnel in uniform and not in a compensatory pay status to attend special events for ceremonial purposes as authorized by the Division (i.e.; Special Olympics Wisconsin events, Wisconsin Troopers Association events, funerals, etc.).
- B. The Academy will be responsible for initial training with the ballistic vest. Continual training involving wear of newly issued ballistic vests, exterior vests and other vests will be conducted as determined by the Region Commander or his/her designee.

C. Care and Inspection

1. All personnel shall be responsible for maintaining ballistic vests in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations and in a condition of cleanliness and serviceability as appropriate.
2. Regular inspections for wear and tear of the ballistic vest should be performed by the respective employee.
3. Ballistic vests should be replaced according to manufacturer's and NIJ recommendations.
4. Issues regarding serviceability and/or functionality of ballistic vests should be brought to the attention of the respective supervisor.
5. Issued ballistic vests that are worn or damaged will be replaced by the Division when required. Costs of issued ballistic vests that are damaged due to misuse or abuse by the officer shall be reimbursed by the employee to the Division.

D. Supervisory Responsibilities

1. Supervisors shall conduct spot checks to ensure uniformed sworn employees are wearing the ballistic vest.
2. When wear and tear deterioration or other serviceability and/or functionality issues of a ballistic vest are brought to a supervisor's attention, the supervisor shall notify the region/post lieutenant, or higher authority as applicable, and provide recommendation for replacement when warranted.

VI. REFERENCES

Policy and Procedure 11-19, Uniform Policy
NIJ Standard-0101.06