

CITY OF OCONOMOWOC POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICIES & PROCEDURES

DATE: May 13, 2020

HISTORY: February 11, 2015
March 11, 1997

SUBJECT: **Soft Body Armor**

POLICY: 96-002

I. PURPOSE

This policy specifies when wearing body armor is mandatory. If the incident is not considered mandatory, the wearing of body armor is optional.

II. DEFINITION

- A.** Soft Body Armor: a vest made of materials which provide ballistic protection. The vest may be worn under the uniform shirt, or in approved external carriers.
- B.** Immediately Available: wearing body armor or having it accessible on short notice.
- C.** Accessible: is defined as in assigned squad, building, office, or locker.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Issuance of Soft Body Armor

- 1. Officers will wear only soft body armor purchased from the agency approved manufacturers. The police department will determine minimum specifications for soft body armor according to NIJ Standards. All soft body armor vests will have a minimum five (5) year warranty.
- 2. The police department will pay for the base package soft body armor (as determined by current minimum specifications) for all officers. Threat level and trauma plate upgrades, and approved exterior vest carriers are allowed, but at the officer's expense.
- 3. The police department will determine replacement rotation of soft body armor. Current manufacturer data recommends replacement on a five (5) year cycle based on usage and care.
- 4. All soft body armor issued under this policy will remain the property of the police department.

B. Use of Soft Body Armor

- 1. All uniformed personnel assigned to operations, whose primary duty is to answer calls for service, will wear their soft body armor.
- 2. School Resource Officers will wear their soft body armor when in uniform. An external vest cover may be worn, when in civilian clothes.
- 3. All sworn personnel, uniformed and plain clothed, involved in incidents listed below shall wear soft body armor:
 - a. where officers believe that an individual may use a firearm
 - b. search warrants where officers believe a felony suspect may be present
 - c. felony arrest warrants where the suspect is not in custody

- d. any training exercise involving the discharge of firearms
- e. a supervisor may require an officer to wear a vest in situations not addressed in a-d

C. Exemptions from Use of Soft Body Armor

1. A doctor's excuse must be provided when a physical condition prevents the comfortable wearing of the soft body armor vest.
2. When the officer's supervisor determines that circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing the soft body armor.
3. With approval, an officer may be excused from wearing a soft body armor vest when in a non-enforcement role, such a traffic control or when heat conditions are a detriment to performance.
4. Any deviations from required wearing of a soft body armor vest must have the approval of the Chief of Police or his designee.

D. Inspection of Soft Body Armor

1. Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring that soft body armor is worn and maintained as required by this policy through routine observation and quarterly inspections.

E. Care and Maintenance of Soft Body Armor

1. Officers shall routinely inspect their personal soft body armor for signs of damage and for general cleanliness.
2. As dirt and perspiration may erode ballistic panels, each officer shall be responsible for cleaning personal soft body armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Officers are responsible for the proper storage, maintenance, and care of personal soft body armor in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
4. Officers are responsible for reporting damage or excessive wear to the ballistic panels to their supervisor which will be routed to the Captain for repair or replacement.
5. Duty related damage/wear will be replaced by the department at no cost to the officer. Damage caused by abuse will be at the officer's expense.
6. Officers who have assigned vehicles and store soft body armor in the vehicle will ensure that it is stored in a fashion designed to protect the soft body armor from deterioration from the elements. Failure to do so is considered abuse.

IV. EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY MAY BE AUTHORIZED ONLY BY THE CHIEF OF POLICE

This policy is effective immediately
and will supersede any directives or understandings in conflict