

MISSOULA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL



Subject:

BALLISTIC VESTS

Effective Date:
8/7/2019

Original Date:
07/01/2011

Next Review:
4/25/2021

Chapter
14

Policy #
14.17

Distribution:
DEPARTMENT

References:

NIJ Ballistic Vest Standards; DOJ Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Act

I. Purpose

- A. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the required wear of ballistic vests by sworn Missoula Police Officers.
- B. A ballistic vest is a proven piece of personal protective equipment which increases safety to officers by providing protection from firearms, edged weapons and blunt trauma. Ballistic vests are not a substitute for good officer safety techniques during field activities. Officers wearing ballistic vests and practicing good techniques in-turn increase public safety by equipping the officer to perform police duties during dangerous circumstances.

II. Policy

- A. It is policy that all uniformed officers while on duty for the Missoula Police Department will be required to wear a ballistic vest. Non-uniformed officers are required to wear a ballistic vest under the following circumstances:
- B. All officers are required to wear a ballistic vest during the following activities:
 - 1. The service of an arrest and/or search warrant or any planned operation where interaction with subjects on probation/parole or any potentially armed and/or dangerous subject will be encountered.
 - 2. Training activities where a risk of physical harm exists, including but not limited to: firearms training, police vehicle operations course training, defensive tactics training.
 - 3. Officers assigned to Street Crimes Unit or plain clothes operational details, unless approved an exception under an operational plan.
 - 4. All officers on duty working in plain clothes must have a ballistic vest with them at work.
 - 5. The required ballistic vest for uniformed officers may be worn under their uniform shirt, or a department approved external vest carrier. A non-uniformed

officer may wear their ballistic vest over their normal civilian clothes; however, the officer must be clearly identifiable as a police officer.

III. Definitions

On duty- On duty status refers to any time the officer is being compensated to perform law enforcement duties while representing the Missoula Police Department. This includes regular work hours, special overtime duties and outside hire events.

IV. Issuance

- A. Upon hire, the Missoula Police Department issues one (1) ballistic vest and two (2) vest carriers to sworn police officers.
- B. Initial issue and all subsequent replacement vests must comply with the current minimum protective standards prescribed by the National Institute of Justice for at least the ballistic threat of the officer's department issued handgun.
- C. All ballistic vests worn by officers on duty must be department approved.
- D. Repair and Replacement:
 - 1. Officers will be issued replacement vests in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for replacement cycles, not to exceed five (5) years.
 - 2. Vests provided by the MPD for an officer's use will remain the property of the department and officers may not alter the vest without permission from their division Captain
 - 3. If an officer has paid for an upgrade to an issued vest, and they leave before the vest is five years old, they may purchase the vest from the department based on the pro-rated original price of the basic vest. After five years the vest will be given to the officer for proper disposal.

V. Care and Maintenance

- A. Inspection, care and maintenance of an officer's ballistic vest shall be the responsibility of the individual officer.

VI. External Vest Carriers

- A. The current (July 2019) approved external vest carriers are the Point Blank Guardian GD2M00BV0J in Midnight Blue and Armor Express Bravo Traverse #1155M in LA Blue The department issued badge or cloth badge and embroidered or printed name tapes and printed "POLICE" back placard are required on this carrier.

Previous authorized external vest carriers such as the US ARMOR, Model #F500 in LA Blue are authorized until the ballistic panels inside reach their replacement date.

- B. Only LA Blue, Midnight Blue and Black pouches may be worn on department external carriers. Pouches must provide adequate retention and protection of department issued equipment (Taser, Glock magazines, radio, OC-10, flashlight and handcuffs) all other external carrier pouches must be approved by the division Captain.
- C. Officers may not carry their duty weapon on the external vest.