



RUSSELLVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number:  
Section:  
Original Date:  
Revised Date:

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the care, use, and maintenance of protective body armor.

## POLICY

In accordance with NFPA 1500, the fire department shall provide each member with protective clothing and protective equipment that is designed to provide protection from the hazards to which the member is likely to be exposed and is suitable for the tasks that the member is expected to perform. Body armor has been proven to provide an effective means to protect the wearer from blunt force trauma, sharp objects, as well as gunshot wounds. Protective body armor shall be utilized only by members who are trained and qualified to use such equipment.

## Definitions

**Protective Body Armor:** Personal Protective equipment that provides protection for the torso and head against specific ballistic threats and penetrating weapons (knives, etc.). This is to include the following protective equipment:

1. Plate Carrier (Carrier only, no ballistics)
2. Soft Armor Plates
3. Hard Armor Plates
4. Cumberbund Armor
5. Helmet

## Care, Use, and Maintenance of Protective Body Armor

1. The care, use and maintenance of protective body armor shall be in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
2. All protective body armor shall meet or exceed National Institute of Justice NIF 0101.06 requirements.
3. Body armor shall be correctly fitted to each member using such PPE following the manufacturer's recommendations and shall not be used beyond the manufacturer's warranty period.
4. As with any type of personal protective equipment, personnel shall not utilize body armor or bullet proof vests if they have not been trained in its use and limitations.
5. Personnel shall not wear improperly sized, ill-fitting, or damaged protective body armor.
6. Personnel without body armor are strictly prohibited from exposing themselves to situations where its use is required, and are required to remain in secure areas at incident scenes, including in staging areas and/or in vehicles.
7. All questions on the care, use and maintenance of protective body armor shall be referred to the fire department safety officer.

Approved

Fire Chief



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### Use of Body Armor

1. Personnel should wear body armor anytime they feel it is necessary.
2. Body armor shall be worn when dispatched to the following violent incidents:
  - a. Active Shooter/Rescue Task Force deployment (helmet required)
  - b. Barricaded Subject (helmet required)
  - c. Bomb Emergency
  - d. Disturbance with Injury
  - e. Homicide/Possible
  - f. Hostage Situation (helmet required)
  - g. Officer Down (helmet required)
  - h. Shooting
  - i. Gunshot Wound
  - j. Stabbing
  - k. Suicidal Subject
  - l. Suicide where the means involve a weapon or are unknown

*Note: This list is not intended to be all inclusive.*

3. Other violent incidents where body armor is suggested may include:
  - a. Suspected substance abuse incidents
  - b. Unstable mental patients
  - c. Normal dispatches that suddenly become violent
  - d. Upon direction of Law Enforcement
  - e. Upon direction of the Company Officer or Incident Commander
4. Personnel dispatched to the above types of incidents shall don protective body armor prior to entering the affected area and shall wear said PPE until all potential threats have been mitigated by law enforcement.
5. The wearing of protective body armor shall not relieve personnel from the requirement that they stage or remain in a secure area of the incident scene until informed by law enforcement that the scene is secure.
6. The protection offered by protective body armor depends in part upon concealment of the vest so an attacker cannot purposely aim at or attack an unprotected area of the body. Whenever possible the vest should be covered by a shirt, jacket, EMS coat, or firefighting turnout coat.
7. When not in use protective body armor shall be properly secured to prevent theft. All department issued body armor should be stored in full compliance with the manufacturer's guidance. Generally, all body armor should be stored away from moisture or high humidity. Body armor should be stored in a location that is reasonably accessible to members as needed. During times of known or anticipated violent events, body armor may be moved to and stored in any location that makes it more accessible to members.

Approved

Fire Chief