

NEW CANAAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: USE OF BODY ARMOR

GENERAL ORDER NUMBER: 11-02-116

FILE: SRVS 7

LAW ENFORCEMENT

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

I PURPOSE/POLICY

The purpose of this general order is to provide officers within the New Canaan Police Department with guidelines for the proper use and care of their body armor.

It is the policy of this department 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.

II RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all departmental personnel to adhere to this general order. It is the additional responsibility of the supervisory and command staff to insure its compliance.

III PROCEDURES

A The following terms, for purposes of this general order, shall be defined as follows:

1. Body Armor (i.e. Bulletproof Vest) – Is an article of protective clothing that is designed to minimize an officer's injuries as a result of their being struck by a fired bullet. It is important to note that such vests are, by design, generally effective in providing protection against ammunition fire by a handgun. There is however, little if any protective value against bullets when fired from a rifle.
2. Field Activities – Duty assignments, excluding extra-duty employment, 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 capacities.

B The following guidelines will pertain to the issuance of body armor to an officer.

1. Approved body armor shall be provided by the police department to each new recruit as part of their initial issuance of equipment.
2. Officers whose body armor is nearing the end of its useful service life shall be issued a replacement vest by the Town of New Canaan.
 - a) Officers shall continue to wear their body armor that is in need of replacement, until such time as the Town has issued a replacement.

3. All body armor issued must comply with protective and related requirements prescribed under current standards of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). Approved body armor shall meet or exceed, the NIJ standard IIA class/level specifications.

C The following guidelines shall be adhered to regarding the use of body armor.

1. Officers may only wear approved body armor.
2. Body armor shall be worn by recruit officers during their field training program
3. Both officers who are assigned to a uniformed function and non-uniformed sworn officers are required to wear body armor while engaged in field activities. The only exceptions to this policy shall be;
 - a. When a physician determines that an officer has a medical condition that would preclude their wearing body armor.
 - b. When the officer is involved in undercover or plain clothes assignments that his/her supervisor determines could be compromised by the wearing of body armor; or
 - c. When the department determines that circumstances make it inappropriate to the mandate the wearing of body armor.

D In order to ensure the maximum longevity and effectiveness of an officer's body armor, it will be inspected in accordance with the following guidelines;

1. Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring that body armor is worn and maintained in accordance with this policy through routine observation and periodic inspections.
2. The Commander of Staff Services or designee may at his/her discretion, conduct inspections of the body armor and check for issues that may include; fit, cleanliness, signs of wear, damage or abuse.

E. The following guidelines shall apply to the care, maintenance and replacement of body armor;

1. Officers shall routinely inspect their body armor for signs of damage and for general cleanliness.
2. Officers are responsible for the proper storage, maintenance and care of their body armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Officers are responsible for reporting damage or excessive wear to the ballistic panels or cover to the department's training officer.
4. Body armor shall be replaced in accordance with the guidelines and protocols established by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ).

F. The department's training officer shall have overall responsibility for the body armor program. As such, the training office's responsibilities shall include;

1. Maintaining an inventory and replacement schedule of all body armor utilized by department personnel.

2. Monitoring technological advances in the body armor industry that may necessitate a change in the type and/or level in body armor and making recommendations regarding body armor specifications when appropriate.
3. Periodically assessing weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.
4. Compiling the appropriate documentation necessary and submitting it to the manufacturer any body armor that was damaged as a result of a bullet strike or other potentially damaging occurrence.
5. Maintaining reports and/or statistical data on incidents where armor has or has not protected officers from harm, including traffic accidents.

IV DISTRIBUTION

This general order will be reproduced in electronic and traditional media. All sworn personnel shall have access to Department general orders through a read-only file on their individual domain of the Department's computer network. Printed copies and/or CD's will also be placed in locations throughout headquarters so that they are easily accessible to all personnel.

V EFFECTIVE DATE

This general order was approved by the Police Commission on July 5, 2011 and was effective on July 5, 2011.

Revised July 2014

Per Order,

Leon Krolikowski
Chief of Police