



**Policy Number: 1006 – Body Armor**  
**Effective Date: February 4, 2021**  
**Revision Date: February 4, 2021**  
**Approved By: Brandon Gatlin, Interim Chief of Police**

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## **1006.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidelines for the proper use of body armor.

## **1006.2 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Montana State University Billings Police Department (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.

## **1006.3 ISSUANCE**

The Patrol Sergeant shall ensure that body armor is issued to all officers and that, when issued, the body armor meets or exceeds the standards of the National Institute of Justice.

Body armor shall be issued when an officer begins service at the Department and shall be replaced when the body armor is expired, worn or damaged to the point that its effectiveness or functionality has been compromised.

It is the responsibility of each employee to return previously issued body armor when replacement body armor is received. The employee's supervisor shall ensure compliance with this directive. Previously issued body armor shall be disposed of as directed by the Chief of Police.

The Chief of Police may authorize issuance of body armor to uniformed, non-sworn members whose jobs may make wearing of body armor advisable.

### **1006.3.1 USE**

Generally, the required use of body armor is subject to the following:

1. Officers shall only wear Department approved body armor.
2. Officers shall wear body armor any time they are in a situation where they could reasonably be expected to take enforcement action.
3. Officers shall wear body armor when working in uniform or taking part in Department range training.

4. Officers may be excused from wearing body armor when they are involved in undercover or plainclothes work that their supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor, or when a supervisor determines that other circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor.
5. In those instances when body armor is not worn, officers should have reasonable access to their body armor.

### **1006.3.2 INSPECTION**

Supervisors should ensure through routine observation, and periodic documented inspections, that body armor is worn and maintained in accordance with this policy.

Annual inspections of body armor should be conducted by a person trained to perform the inspection for fit, cleanliness and signs of damage, abuse and wear.

### **1006.3.3 CARE AND MAINTENANCE**

The required care and maintenance of body armor is subject to the following:

1. Officers are responsible for inspecting their body armor for signs of damage, wear and cleanliness at the start of each shift.
2. Unserviceable body armor shall be reported to an immediate superior who is responsible for the proper storage of their body armor.
  - a. Body armor should not be stored for an extended period of time in an area where environmental conditions (i.e. temperature, light, humidity) could potentially degrade its effectiveness.
3. Officers are responsible for the care and cleaning of their body armor pursuant to the manufacturer's care instructions.
  - a. Body armor should not be exposed to any cleaning agents or methods not specifically recommended by the manufacturer.
  - b. Failure to follow manufacturer's care instructions may damage the ballistic performance capabilities of the body armor. If care instructions for the body armor cannot be located, the manufacturer should be contacted to request the instructions.
4. Body armor should be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended replacement schedule, or when its effectiveness or functionality has been compromised.

## **1006.4 RANGE OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The responsibilities of the Range Officer include, but are not limited to:

1. Monitoring technological advances in the body armor industry for any appropriate changes to Department approved body armor.
2. Assessing the level of weapons and ammunition currently utilized by the public and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.
3. Educating officers about the safety benefits of wearing body armor.