

	MEDFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT	POLICY NO. 4.11a
Subject:		
SOFT BODY ARMOR		
MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED: 41.3.5, 41.3.6		DATE OF ISSUE: 06/25/2023
ISSUING AUTHORITY: Michelle Guerette Chief of Police		EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/25/2023 REVISION DATE: 11/03/2025

BACKGROUND:

Soft body armor is designed to protect the wearer against projectiles fired by most handguns and shotguns. Soft body armor is not designed to protect the wearer from medium to high power rifle projectiles. The degree of effectiveness depends upon the protection rating of the body armor.

Soft body armor may protect against improvised weapons, such as broken bottles, but is usually not effective against knives or ice picks. Sharp, pointed instruments used in a stabbing motion are likely to penetrate soft body armor and may deliver a fatal injury. Soft body armor may be effective against slashing knife attacks.

While soft body armor provides a significant level of protection, it is not a substitute for officer safety procedures. The purpose of this policy is to provide law enforcement officers with guidelines for the proper use and care of soft body armor in order to provide the maximum protection possible.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Medfield Police Department to maximize officer safety through the use of body armor in combination with prescribed safety procedures.

PROCEDURES: [41.3.5]

Issuance of Soft Body Armor

All soft body armor worn must be issued or approved by the Medfield Police Department and comply with protective and related requirements prescribed under current standards of the National Institute of Justice.

Soft body armor that is worn or damaged will be replaced by the Department. The life expectancy of body armor worn under normal conditions is approximately five years. Soft body armor that must be replaced due to misuse or abuse by the officer shall be paid for by the officer.

Use of Soft Body Armor

Soft body armor shall be worn by recruit officers as specified by the Municipal Police Training Committee or other academy regulations.

Officers assigned to uniformed duty are required to wear body armor during their shift while engaged in field activities, unless an agency-approved physician determines that an officer has a medical condition that would preclude wearing body armor. In addition, all officers must wear body armor during high risk and/or tactical situations, including but not limited to, strike details, workplace violence details, search warrant executions, drug raids, initial crime scene response, and serving felony warrants. **[41.3.6]**

It is strongly recommended that all officers wear body armor during their tour of duty. Officers may choose not to wear body armor when assigned to administrative duties, detectives, or “paid details” where traffic control and direction is the primary responsibility. Officers who choose not to wear body armor during these assignments must have it immediately available or easily accessible at all times.

Care, Maintenance, Inspection, and Replacement of Soft Body Armor

Cleaning, maintenance, and inspection of soft body armor are the responsibility of the wearer. 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.

Officers are responsible for proper storage, maintenance, and care of soft body armor in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Unserviceable soft body armor shall be reported to the wearer's supervisor. Soft body armor will be replaced in accordance with guidelines and protocols established by the National Institute of Justice.