



Body Armour Personal Issue Procedure

This document is part of North Yorkshire Police policy to which all Chief Constable personnel and the functions provided by the Deputy Mayor for Policing as part of the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority are required to adhere.

Procedure Statement

This procedure aims to minimise the risks of injury to Police Officers, Special Constables and Police Staff from firearms or edged weapons through the provision and wearing of personal issue body armour. The Force will issue body armour, which provides the level of protection to the standard approved for the specific role. The standard will be determined by a role-based risk assessment.

North Yorkshire Police has a statutory responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the risks to staff are managed and controlled. This statutory responsibility is further enhanced by the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 to provide personal protective equipment where risks cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

Body armour is designed to protect the vital organs but cannot offer complete protection. It is essential that staff continue to undertake dynamic risk assessments to aid the decision-making process enabling the most appropriate course of action to minimise the risks to personal safety.

Managers, Supervisors and all Officers and Staff have a statutory responsibility (under H&S legislation, as interpreted by case law and by reference to common law) to ensure that body armour is worn and maintained in accordance with this procedure.

Body armour should be worn in accordance with the [risk assessment](#)

Overarching Policies:

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Dress and Appearance Policy](#)

Other Documents:

[Personal Equipment Online Assessment](#)

Process

1. Body Armour Wearing Procedure

1.1 Wearing of Body Armour by Police Officers

1.1(a) Operationally Active Uniform Officers and Special Constables (except Police Motorcyclists)

Officers will be provided with personal issue body armour which **must** be worn at all times whilst operationally active, including whilst in vehicles.

Officers will not be required to wear body armour whilst giving evidence in Court, or whilst waiting within the court building to give evidence. However, if an assessment of the circumstances by the District or Department, (in liaison with the Court regarding giving of evidence) taking into account all available information identifies that a significant risk exists, body armour will be worn.

1.1(b) PSU Officers

In addition to the general requirements in paragraph 1.1(a) body armour must be worn when actively deployed into public order situations, even when flame proof overalls are worn.

1.1(c) Police Motorcyclists

Police Motorcyclists will be provided with personal issue body armour, which will be worn:

- whilst undertaking pre-planned arrests where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of confrontation
- whilst undertaking enquiries into incidents involving members of the public/suspects where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of confrontation
- in any other circumstances identified as a result of an informed risk assessment by an individual, their supervisor or a colleague

Police Motorcyclists will not be required to wear body armour whilst giving evidence in Court, or whilst waiting within the court building to give evidence. However, if an assessment of the circumstances by the District or Department, (in liaison with the Court regarding giving of evidence) taking into account all available information, identifies that a significant risk exists, body armour will be worn.

1.1(d) Operationally Active Plain Clothes Police Officers

All Plain Clothes Police Officers will be provided with personal issue body armour, which will be worn:

- whilst undertaking pre-planned operations involving forced entry into premises where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of confrontation
- whilst undertaking pre-planned arrests where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of confrontation
- whilst undertaking enquiries into incidents involving members of the public/suspects where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of confrontation
- in any other circumstances identified as a result of an informed risk assessment by an individual officer and or their supervisor
- whilst undertaking Close Protection duties N.B.

Close Protection Officers (CPO) may, with the permission of Supervision, undertake specific duties when deployed on a Protection operation without body armour. This will be a command decision.

The CPO Sergeant or in their absence the Operational Firearms Commander (OFC) or in the absence of either of these, the Lead CPO for the operation will make this decision which then must be ratified by the Tactical Firearms Commander (TFC) before or during the deployment. The Supervisor will base this decision on all the operational circumstances, the threat and risk assessments to all officers and the Principal, and this procedure. The decision and rationale will be recorded.

The circumstances where body armour may not be worn are duties or activities where wearing it would create additional risks to the officer which cannot be managed or mitigated. In these instances, the threat assessment for the operation, the Principal and the CPO must be assessed as LOW.

Specific examples include where a period of prolonged or strenuous activity is programmed by the Principal or where due to extreme heat or other environmental conditions the wearing of body armour could degrade the effectiveness of the CPO and thereby the protection afforded to the Principal. There are also occasions when the wearing of an outer jacket is not an option and wearing armour may reveal the identity of officers and the principal increasing the risk.

If the threat assessment is higher than LOW to the Operation, the Principal or CPO then the wearing of body armour will need to be managed operationally, and in those instances, supervision may not give permission for CPOs to take their body armour off.

The dynamic nature of changing risk is such that body armour and PPE should be readily available to plain clothes officers and therefore where possible carried within vehicles.

Plain clothes Police Officers will not be required to wear body armour on duties where risks to safety could be significantly compromised if an individual's identity is revealed. In such circumstances, the risk assessment for these activities must identify the alternative control measure, which need to be implemented to manage the risks.

Plain Clothes Officers will not be required to wear body armour whilst giving evidence in Court, or whilst waiting within the court buildings to give evidence. However, if an assessment of the circumstances by the District or Department, (in liaison with the court regarding giving of evidence) taking into account all available information, identifies that a significant risk exists body armour will be worn.

1.2 Wearing of Body Armour by Operational Police Staff

Police staff roles where a risk assessment has identified that there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of confrontation will be provided with personal issue body armour which must be worn at all times whilst operationally active.

These roles include but is not limited to:

- Warranted Officers
- Police Community Support Officers
- Financial Investigation Officer

Police staff in roles where a risk assessment has identified that there may be a risk of confrontation will be provided with body armour, the wearing of which will be based on an informed dynamic risk assessment of the circumstances by the individual and/or their supervisor.

Police Staff in confrontational roles will not be required to wear body armour whilst giving evidence in Court, or whilst waiting within the Court building to give evidence. However, if an assessment of the circumstances by the District or Department, (in liaison with the court regarding giving of evidence) taking into account all available information, identifies that a significant risk exists, body armour will be worn.

2. Body Armour Health, Safety and Maintenance

2.1 Body armour Panels and covers

Body armour and covers will be supplied and fitted as per the [Dress and Appearance Policy](#)

2.2 Welfare and Medical aspects

The body armour incorporates the latest technological developments to ensure maximum possible comfort whilst being worn. However, Officers and staff should take advantage of opportunities, such as during breaks or when report writing to remove the armour.

During periods of hot weather or when engaged in special events or operations, Officers and Staff are advised to ensure they stay hydrated by increasing their intake of fluids

Managers and Supervisors responsible for planning special events/operations shall ensure that adequate provision is made for the welfare of all officers and staff (breaks refreshments etc)

Any individuals who feel they are experiencing any medical problems which they believe are related to or compounded by wearing of body armour or the carriage of personal safety equipment must notify their line manager in writing.

Any officers or staff experiencing difficulties relating to the fit of their vest should in the first instance contact the clothing stores who will be able to advise on fitting issues.

If problems persist then line managers and supervisors should make the necessary arrangements for a referral to the occupational health unit via their HR Manager,

2.3 Routine Maintenance of Body Armour

All Officers and Staff issued with body armour must ensure that it is periodically examined and annually complete the [Personal Equipment Online Assessment](#)

2.4 Cleaning of Body Armour

All officers and staff issued with body armour are responsible for ensuring that it is cleaned and maintained in accordance with the instruction labels on the protective plates and covers.

2.5 Storage of Body Armour

Body armour must be stored in a manner that will not affect its integrity or performance. The armour should ideally be hung up, stood up or laid flat. It should never have other items of any substantial weight stored on top of it.

2.6 Integrity of Body Armour after incidents

All officers and staff with body armour are responsible for having the integrity checked after any incidents which may have affected it. Officers and Staff involved in a specific incident involving weapons, road traffic collisions or any other incidents in which the integrity of the body armour may have been damaged, should contact the clothing store in the first instance who can advise on the appropriate course of action including the issuing of any replacements if necessary. Out of hours if officers have any concerns regarding the integrity of their body armour post an incident, they should raise those concerns with their immediate supervision.

Definition of Special Terms - N/A