



**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS**

General Order Number: 06-34	Effective Date: November 27, 2018
Division: Emergency Operations	
Chapter: Ballistic Protective Equipment (BPE)	
By Order of the Fire Chief: Benjamin M. Barksdale <i>BMB</i>	Issue Date: November 27, 2018

POLICY

This General Order establishes a policy and procedures for the use, care and maintenance of Department-issued ballistic protection.

DEFINITIONS

Ballistic Protective Equipment (BPE or Body Armor) – A garment that offers a degree of protection from firearm ammunition or explosive shrapnel. Since BPE is not designed to be specifically fitted to the individual, offers adjustability for a range of sizes, and worn on a constant/daily basis, it is classified as ballistic protective equipment (BPE) and NOT personal protective equipment (PPE). The PGFD ballistic soft body armor is a threat-level Type III-A (with Type I offering the lowest protection to Type IV offering the highest) as defined by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Standard 0101.06. The ensemble includes a composite front and rear plate which raises the protection to level III (rifle protection). The plates also afford the wearer some protection from an edged weapon.

Cold Zone – An area surrounding the “Warm Zone” where first responders can operate without concern of danger or threat to their personal safety or health. BPE is not needed in cold zone operations.

Hot Zone – Area typically reserved for police and tactical EMS personnel where an ACTIVE threat persists. Fire/EMS personnel will not knowingly be sent into an active threat area. The intent is to minimize the area directly impacted by the Hot Zone to allow a Warm Zone to be established adjacent to, but not in the immediate area of the hot zone to create access to victims.

Patrol Officer – Standard, uniformed police officers, assigned to the traditional police function of patrol.

Rescue Task Force (also known as Escorted Warm Zone Care) – Protective formation of law enforcement personnel integrated with Fire Department personnel for point of wounding medical stabilization and expedient extraction within the Warm Zone. This team may transition into an extraction team if/when needed by Incident Command.

Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) – The medical management of casualties under hostile conditions, expecting limited equipment, limited patient assessment, and limited treatment until the patient is removed from the Warm Zone or the threat is eliminated.

Warm Zone – Any operational area with a potential threat to personal safety or health. The Warm Zone typically exists between the Hot Zones and the Cold Zones.



PROCEDURES/RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Responsibility

- A. Crew members are responsible for ensuring that this equipment is accounted for, properly stored, and in a state of readiness during daily apparatus checks (see Attachment A).

II. Use

- A. The Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department has purchased BPE, or body armor, for use by Fire and EMS personnel during and within hostile events.
- B. A complete body armor package consists of the ballistic armor, a composite plate to be used in conjunction with the armor, the carrier, attachments on the carrier, and a carry bag.
- C. Two (2) sets of body armor shall be carried on each BLS/ALS transport unit. Four (4) sets of body armor shall be carried in all Battalion Chief, Safety Officer, and EMS Duty Officer vehicles.
- D. Body armor shall be checked prior to the beginning of the shift for proper fit and adjustment as needed.
- E. Body armor should be donned when providers are operating at an incident scene where:
 - 1. There is a great likelihood or potential for a ballistic or violent event.
 - 2. When ordered by command.
 - 3. Providers have the option to don ballistic protection at any time during any operation where there is a real or perceived threat.
- F. The vest shall be worn with a clearly identifiable uniform with Departmental patch for ease of identification. The vest should be worn over top of the uniform shirt and not over top of turnout gear.
- G. Personnel may not personally purchase body armor to wear for Departmental use.

III. General

- A. This model of vest is designed to have the greatest degree of adjustability both in the shoulder straps and the cummerbund to accommodate a large majority of body sizes. Some personnel, due to their extremely small or large build, will not properly fit the ballistic protection. The vest should sit just below the sternal notch and cover most of the chest and rib cage, protecting vital organs.



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B. Procedure for Donning the Ballistic Vest

1. Remove excess/bulky clothing. Grasp the front carrier cover (under the pouch) and lift upward, separating the Velcro, and open the cummerbund. Using a technique like the Over-the-Head SCBA application, lower the carrier down over the head and onto the shoulders. Place the other arm through the arm hole and re-secure the cummerbund and front Velcro flap.
2. Ensure the top of the carrier is positioned one inch below the clavicle notch (approximately two fingers) of the indentation in the center of the neck.
3. There are Velcro adjustments on the shoulder that can be adjusted to raise or lower the carrier to achieve proper fit if needed.
4. The wearer should ensure the side panels are even with the bottom border of the front of the carrier and not too tight, so the wearer is able to inhale and exhale forcefully.

A. Supplies Carried on the Vest

1. The vest will have several attached items for use by Department members. The items approved to be permanently attached to the vest via the MOLLE (Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment) system include:
 - a) First-Light Flashlight with angled head for treating patients in a low light environment.
 - b) Tape dispenser with Warm Zone sorting tape (Orange/white and Black/White).
 - c) Ballistic eye protection with hard case.
 - d) Trauma shears with lanyard.
 - e) Compact tactical litter (attached to rear of vest).

IV. Maintenance

- A. Body armor shall be inspected daily. Any discrepancy in the issued ballistic equipment shall be immediately reported via the chain-of-command. Damaged vests will be placed out of service. The EMS office will maintain loaner vests and shall be contacted for replacement.
- B. Follow all labels and instructions for care and maintenance. Do not power wash, machine wash or tumble dry any components of the BPE; do not use bleach and/or any cleaning chemicals.
- C. Carrier Cleaning
 1. Lay carrier flat and remove all ballistic panels, plates and supplies. Use micro wipes, a damp cloth or sponge with mild antimicrobial soap or mild laundry detergent. Wipe off excess soap with clean water and a damp sponge, wipe dry.
 2. Do not hang or line dry in the sun. Allow to air dry or use approved station gear dryers.
 3. Do not use deodorizing sprays such as Febreze or Lysol.



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4. For heavier contamination, the carrier can be cleaned with a soft bristle brush with mild laundry detergent and running water.
5. Any carrier that sustains significant (heavy or gross) soiling (blood or body fluid contamination) will need to be sent to Logistics & Supply for specialized cleaning.

D. Ballistic Panel Cleaning

1. Remove panels and lay flat. Panels can simply be wiped with micro wipes or with a damp cloth or sponge with mild antimicrobial soap or mild laundry detergent. Wipe off excess soap with clean water and a damp sponge, wipe dry.
2. Do not hang or line dry and do not dry in the sun. Allow to air dry before inserting into carrier.
3. Make sure the panels are reinserted properly with the product label facing the interior, toward the wearer.

E. Composite Plate Cleaning

1. Plates should be removed and wiped with a damp cloth with simple soap and water solution and air dried. Providers should take note of which side of the plate is worn facing the body, and shall follow the directions displayed on the front and rear plate appropriately.

F. Storage

1. Heat, moisture and ultraviolet light will cause body armor to degrade. All BPE components shall be kept together and stored in the carrying bag supplied with the vest. The vests are designed to be carried in their bags and placed in the PPE compartment of transport units, or in the rear of a command vehicle.

REFERENCES

Committee for Tactical Emergency Casualty Care Tactical Emergency Casualty Care Guidelines.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Model Framework for Law Enforcement and Fire/EMS Response to a Law Enforcement Incident v 4.1

General Order 05-10, Multiple Casualty Incident Operations

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Standard 0101.06

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A – Ballistic Vest Reference Check
- Attachment B – Vest Components Display
- Attachment C – Proper Vest Fit

*Division 05 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 34 – Ballistic Protective Equipment (BPE)
Effective Date – November 27, 2018
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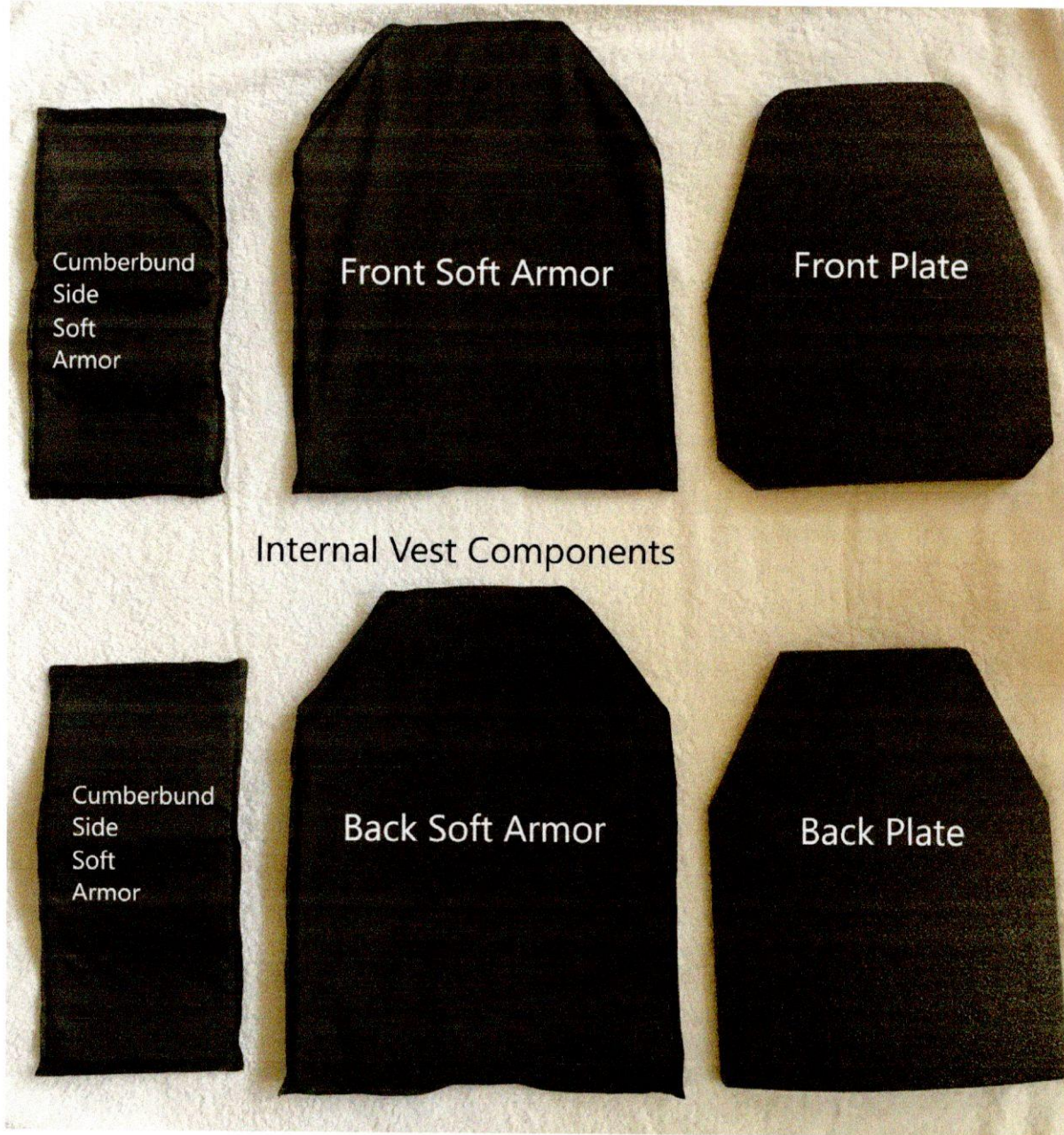
**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT
BALLISTIC VEST REFERENCE CHECK SHEET**

PLEASE REFER TO GO 6-34 FOR MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING PROCEDURES

Unit:	M#	Hard Plate Body Armor	Initials Indicating Compliance
	Vest #	Front	
Vest #1 with carrying bag		Rear	
Vest #2 with carrying bag			
Vest #3 with carrying bag (if applicable)			
Vest #4 with carrying bag (if applicable)			
General Vest Procedures	Initials Indicating Compliance	Flashlight Function Test	Initials Indicating Compliance
Adjust Vest Shoulder Straps for Proper Height Every Shift		Check Momentary On/Off of White Light	
Adjust Vest Cummerbund for Proper Circumference		Check Momentary On/Off of Red/Green Light	
Ensure General Fit of Vest by Donning Vest Every Shift		Check Battery Compartment	
		Ensure Light Detaches from Holder and Re-attach	
Vest - Front	Initials Indicating Compliance		
P.G.F.D. Hi-Visibility Identifier			
Lanyard			
Trauma Shears			
Front TECC Equipment Pouch			
Flashlight			
Sorting Tape (black/white & orange/white)			
Eye Protection with Case			
Vest - Rear	Initials Indicating Compliance		
Fire/EMS Hi-Visibility Identifier			
Compact Tactical Litter Holder with Insert			
Soft Body Armor	Initials Indicating Compliance		
Front			
Rear			
Sides (2)			



**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT
BALLISTIC VEST COMPONENTS**





PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT BALLISTIC PROPER VEST FIT

