



# Body Armour Policy

**OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE**

Information	Details
<b>Publication Scheme Y/N</b>	Policy section can be published on Force Website. Procedure section should be withheld
<b>Department of Origin</b>	Matrix
<b>Policy Holder</b>	Chief Supt Head of Matrix
<b>Author</b>	
<b>Related Information</b>	Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1997 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations 1992 Police (Health and Safety) Act 1997 Police (Health and Safety) Regulations 1999 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Merseyside Police Risk Assessment Guide for Managers Merseyside Police Personal Protective Equipment PPE Guidance
<b>This Version</b>	Version 1.1 – Created 10/09/2020
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# Policy

## Statement

This policy aims to minimise the risk of injury to Police Officers, Special Constables, Police Community Support Officers and Police Staff from edged weapons or firearms, through the provision and wearing of personal issue body armour, whilst engaged in their operational or contractual duties. 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.

Merseyside Police has a statutory responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work 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 specific task risk assessments and, where appropriate, dynamic risk assessments to aid the decision making process, enabling the most appropriate course of action to minimise the risks to personal safety.

The Police (Health and Safety) Act 1997 creates offences that may result in criminal proceedings being brought against the Chief Constable or individual officers and employees for any breach of such legislation. Managers, Supervisors and all Officers and Staff therefore have a statutory duty to ensure that body armour is worn and maintained in accordance with this policy, orders and instructions.

For the purpose of this policy, body armour issued to non-Authorised Firearms Officer (AFO) uniform roles will be regarded as General Purpose Body Armour. Body armour issued to AFO's will be regarded as Ballistic Body Armour. Body armour that is worn covertly or by RPU motorcycle officers will be regarded as Covert Body Armour.

## Aims

The main aim of this policy is to ensure that all officers understand their duties under the Health and Safety at Work 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.

The policy is underpinned by procedure that provides clear and unambiguous direction for all Merseyside Police personnel who are or should be issued with body armour do to their forward facing roles.

## Objectives

- a) Minimise the risk to Merseyside Police officers and staff
- b) Ensure compliance with Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

## Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

This policy document sets out principles to help guide decision making and is in some parts quite prescriptive. However, it is vital that officers and staff have the freedom to innovate, exercise discretion and take risk based decisions centred on the needs of the victim and the merits of each case. Non-statutory policies, including College of Policing APP, provide guidance only. They are 'living documents' and it is recognised that there may be a better way of doing this. Accordingly, if staff depart from a policy but are able to give a good rationale for their actions, and have acted with honesty, integrity and professionalism, to make the best decision for the community we serve, they will be trusted and supported.

**Note** *This paragraph inserted 16/06/2016 to emphasise appropriate use of discretion.*