

 <b>FIRE DEPARTMENT GUIDELINE</b>	<b>SFD GUIDELINE:</b> 200-B
	<b>RESPONSIBLE DIVISION:</b> Safety Team
<b>SUBJECT:</b> BALLISTIC PROTECTIVE ENSEMBLE (BPE)	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> 10/07/2020
<b>RELATIONSHIPS TO ADOPTED POLICIES, ORDINANCES:</b>	<b>CYCLE OF REVIEW:</b> Every two years
<b>APPROVALS:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Command Staff	<b>DATE REVISED/APPROVED:</b> 10/07/2020

## PURPOSE

The Scottsdale Fire Department is committed to protecting its personnel by providing a Ballistic Protective Ensemble (BPE) that is appropriate for the hazards which may be encountered when responding to or on-scene of a violent incident or incident which escalates into a violent incident.

## POLICY

The Scottsdale Fire Department's BPE Program is designed to assist in providing personnel with an envelope of protection from hazards associated with violent nature calls. BPE is a system of components and elements comprised to make up an ensemble consisting of a ballistic vest, rifle plates (front and back) and a ballistic helmet.

A ballistic vest is an assigned item of personal ballistic protective equipment that helps absorb the impact and reduce or stop penetration to the body from firearm-fired projectiles and is worn on the torso.

The vests can protect the wearer from small caliber handgun and shotgun projectiles and are resistance to stab and slash attacks from knives and similar close-quarter weapons.

Polyethylene/ceramic plates should be used with the assigned ballistic vest when additional protection against rifle rounds is warranted.

A ballistic helmet is an item of BPE worn on the head to help protect the wearer from small-caliber handgun and shotgun projectiles.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

This Policy applies to all Scottsdale Fire Department Emergency Services Division personnel.

## **PROCEDURES**

Personnel shall don their Ballistic Vest ensemble in the following situations:

- 1) At the Company Officer's or other supervisor's discretion. Suggested incidents included but not limited to:
  - Active Stabbing
  - Active Violence with or without known location of a suspect
  - Active Police scenes
  - Incidents during civil unrest
- 2) All Active Shooter/Shooting incidents (to include ballistic helmet and rifle plates)
- 3) During Special events shifts as directed by the incident IAP
- 4) During night inspections or as directed by the Prevention Deputy Chief

The Scottsdale Fire Department BPE Program consists of the following categories:

- Selection
- Training
- Storage
- Inspection
- Cleaning and Decontamination
- Special Incident Procedure

## **STORAGE**

Ballistic Vests shall:

- Ballistic armor (rifle plates) will be stored in the assigned Black backpack when not in use.
- Not be stored in direct sunlight or exposed to direct sunlight while not being worn.
- Be clean and dry before storage.
- Not be stored in airtight containers unless new and unissued.
- Not be stored at temperatures below -40 F. or above 180 F.
- Be stored in a protective bag to prevent damage if stored in compartments or trunks.
- Not be subjected to sharp objects, tools or other equipment that could damage the ensemble or elements.
- Not be stored inside living quarters or with personal belongings or taken or transported within the passenger compartment of personal vehicles unless stored in a protective case or bag.

- Not be stored in contact with hydraulic fluids, solvents, hydrocarbons, hydrocarbon vapors, or other contaminants.

Ballistic Helmets and Rifle Plates shall:

- Be stored in the cab of its assigned apparatus, with
  - Four helmets per fire apparatus, and two helmets per Battalion Chief Vehicle; ballistic helmets are adjustable to all sizes.
- Not be removed from apparatus unless in use.

## INSPECTION

There are two primary types of BPE inspection – routine and advanced.

### Routine Inspection

Each employee shall conduct a routine inspection of assigned BPE at the beginning of each shift and after each time the element(s) is donned or is suspected of having been exposed to damage or contamination. The routine inspection shall include, as a minimum, the following:

#### Helmet

1. Soiling.
2. Contamination from hazardous materials or biological agents.
3. Physical damage to the shell, such as:
  - a. Cracks, crazing (small cracks), dents and abrasions.
4. Damaged or missing components of the suspension and retention systems.

#### Ballistic Vest

1. Soiling.
2. Contamination from hazardous materials or biological agents.
3. Physical damage to the outer carrier such as:
  - a. Rips, tears, and cuts.
  - b. Thermal damage.

#### Ballistic Plates

1. Soiling.
2. Contamination from hazardous materials or biological agents.
3. Physical damage to the shell, such as:
  - a. Cracks, crazing (small cracks), dents and abrasions.

## CLEANING & DECONTAMINATION

Soiled or contaminated BPE elements shall not be brought into the home, washed in home laundries, or washed in public laundries unless the business is dedicated to handle ballistic protective equipment.

Personnel shall examine the manufacturer's label and user information for specific cleaning instructions. Chlorine bleach or chlorinated solvents shall not be used to clean or decontaminate BPE elements. Heavy scrubbing or spraying with high velocity water jets, such as a power washer, shall not be used. Any questions regarding the cleaning and decontamination of BPE elements should be directed to the Resource Division and your chain of command.

#### Routine cleaning

After each use, any elements that are soiled shall receive routine cleaning. It is the assigned user's responsibility for the routine cleaning of BPE ensemble or elements using the following process:

**IMPORTANT:** Do not machine wash or dry clean ballistic panel insert(s).

1. When possible, initiate cleaning at the incident scene.
2. Brush off any dry debris.
3. Remove ballistic panels from outer carrier.
4. Wipe ballistic panels using a mild soap and water. Set aside to dry.
5. Close all Velcro fasteners on carrier.
6. Dry clean, hand wash, or machine wash carrier on a delicate cycle using medium water temperature. **DO NOT BLEACH.**
7. Tumble dry on a low heat setting or air dry. Iron on a low setting as needed.

Reinsert ballistic panels. **BE SURE THE BALLISTIC PANELS AND OUTER CARRIER ARE DRIED COMPLETELY**

#### SPECIAL INCIDENT PROCEDURE

In the event of Ballistic ensemble theft, the employee will be required to notify their direct supervisor and the Scottsdale Fire Department's Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO) group immediately to ensure the proper reporting process is initiated.

If any employee(s) of the Scottsdale Fire Department suffers serious injury or death while wearing BPE:

1. The BPE will immediately be removed from service
2. Custody will be maintained by the Fire Chief or his/her designee and the BPE shall be kept in a secure location with controlled, documented access.
3. All BPE shall be nondestructively tagged and stored only in paper or cardboard containers to prevent further degradation or damage. Plastic or airtight containers shall not be used.
4. The BPE will be made available to qualified personnel or outside experts as approved by the Fire Chief, to determine the condition thereof.
5. Retention time for the custody of the BPE shall be determined by the Fire Chief.