

**OKALOOSA COUNTY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

Title:	Body Armor for Responders
Policy:	306.00
Purpose:	To provide uniform procedures for the usage and storage of Body Armor.

This policy consists of the following numbered sections:

- 1. Policy**
- 2. Donning/Doffing**
- 3. Inspection, Storage, and Care**
- 4. Statement of Policy**
- 5. Accountability and Compliance**

1. Policy

Okaloosa County issued Body Armor consists of (1) level IIIA helmet, (1) plate carrier with identifiable EMS placard (front and back) with trauma pads, and Level IV steel plates (front and back).

Okaloosa County personnel are authorized to wear the Body Armor for the following incidents/situations:

- A. Any call coded "Echo" by the Emergency Communications Center;
- B. Incidents involving, or potentially involving, weapons or the threat of weapons;
- C. Civil unrest or disturbances;
- D. Special Response Team/Special Weapons and Tactics standbys;
- E. Barricaded subject(s);
- F. Threats of suicide/homicide;
- G. The discretion of a crewmember anytime a threat exist, either perceived or real.

2. Donning/Doffing

Crewmembers shall don Body Armor as soon as it is safe to do so and prior to arriving on scene (after it has been rendered safe by law enforcement). Crewmembers shall not don the Body Armor while responding to the incident or when the ambulance is in motion. Body Armor shall only be removed when the threat no longer exists and/or it is safe to do so (as determined by Law Enforcement).

3. Inspection, Storage, and Care

- A. Crewmembers shall inspect and log in the daily shift report the presence and any visible damage to the Body Armor.
- B. Crewmembers shall ensure that the authorized ballistic plates are present and properly secured into the plate carrier. Plate carriers alone do not have any ballistic or protective properties.
- C. The Body Armor shall be stored securely in the provided county issued bag and preferably in an outside compartment so it does not become a projectile in the event of a crash.
- D. The Body Armor shall not be stored in direct sunlight for an extended period.
- E. Crewmembers will ensure the Body Armor is not stowed wet or damp.
- F. Crewmembers must not drop, throw, or otherwise abuse the Body Armor.

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- G. If plate carrier becomes grossly contaminated, contact Logistics and/or your Branch Commander for decontamination and/or replacement.
- H. Uncontaminated, lightly soiled Body Armor can be cleaned with mild soap and water.
- I. The Body Armor must be allowed to air dry before stowing. Chlorine or bleach shall not be used to clean the plate carrier

4. Statement of Policy

It is the expectation of Okaloosa County Public Safety that crews maintain neutrality during situations where violence or threat of violence may be occurring. No crewmember is expected nor authorized to be on a scene that is unsafe due to violence or threat of violence without the presence and clearance of law enforcement. Following the “safety first” approach, any crewmember who finds himself/herself on an unsafe scene shall immediately leave the scene, stage at a safe location, notify the communications center of the situation, and request Law Enforcement Officer to respond to the scene. If unable to leave because of violence or threat of violence, follow [Policy 202.00](#) and use code 10-24, if applicable.

- A. When responding to staged response calls (“Echo”), Okaloosa County Public Safety crewmembers shall:
 - 1. Stage their ambulance in a position that will minimize the unit’s exposure to potential violence,
 - 2. Stage their ambulance in a position that will maximize the unit’s tactical egress,
 - 3. Conduct themselves in a manner that will not escalate violent or potentially violent situations,
 - 4. Only approach the incident scene when law enforcement personnel have confirmed that the scene is secure.
- B. When responding to staged response calls (“Echo”), Okaloosa County Public Safety crewmembers shall NOT:
 - 1. Approach any unsecured scene not cleared by Law Enforcement;
 - 2. Take any physical offensive action to control an individual or individuals;
 - 3. Intentionally place themselves, other crewmembers, or their unit in the line of sight of an unsecured scene;
 - 4. Enter the scene without notifying dispatch.

5. Accountability and Compliance

- A. It is the responsibility of employees to be accountable of all county equipment and immediately report any discrepancies as they are discovered.
- B. It is the responsibility of employees to use safe practices and follow policies and procedures.
- C. It is the responsibility of employees to use sound judgment and safe operation techniques when responding to and participating in an austere environment.
- D. Branch Commanders will ensure compliance with daily shift reports. Report compliance will be reported quarterly as per [Policy 422.00](#) Vehicle and Equipment Checks.

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