



OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY

Policy Statement

Part III – Community Services



Subject:

Use of Ballistic Vests

Section – Policy Number:

D: Case Management – 2.4

Supersedes:

None

Effective Date:

08/01/2022

Date of Last

Review:

08/01/2024

Related Standards and References:

- [OYA Policy](#): I-C-7.0 (Safety and Health Program)
III-A-4.0 (Searches of Youth and Areas; Processing Contraband or Evidence in Community Placements)
III-D-2.3 (Staff Safety: Meeting with Youth in Community Settings)


Related Procedures:

- None

Policy Owner:

Community Services Assistant
Director

Approved:



Joseph O'Leary, Director

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to delineate how Community Services staff assess job duties and potential for gun violence to determine whether a ballistic vest may be worn.

II. POLICY DEFINITIONS:

Ballistic vest: A vest capable of resisting the impact of a bullet (also called “bulletproof vest”).

III. POLICY:

OYA’s mission is to protect the public and reduce crime by holding youth accountable and providing reformation in safe environments. A juvenile parole/probation officer’s (JPPO) role is to provide community supervision of youth in the legal custody of OYA. JPPOs fulfill this role by coaching, mentoring, brokering services, and holding youth accountable to conditions of their probation or parole. Sometimes while implementing OYA’s mission, staff may be exposed to people who possess firearms that may pose a threat of harm.

OYA has identified diversity, equity, and inclusion as an agency priority and initiative, with a goal to build a respectful, diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for youth and staff that is free from harassment, discrimination, and bias. Data shows youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system. While OYA is only one part of that system, we play a critical role in addressing the historical and systemic inequities

it perpetuates. A youth's race or culture must not be the basis for staff wearing or requesting to wear a ballistic vest. Due to the historic mistrust that youth of color and other marginalized youth have with the juvenile justice system, **staff must be aware of the impact wearing a ballistic vest may have on relationships with youth and families.**

OYA recognizes that ballistic vests may only be worn during certain, limited, and approved situations where staff may be exposed to the threat of gun violence while performing their job duties.

IV. GENERAL STANDARDS:

- A. Staff may only wear a ballistic vest during certain, limited, and approved situations while performing job duties required by policy or their position descriptions.
- B. Staff must not wear a ballistic vest when attending community events or activities in an official capacity. Supervisors must not approve use of ballistic vests for staff to attend community events or activities.
- C. Staff must discuss any job duty that has a potential for gun violence with their supervisor prior to engaging in the duty.
- D. Staff may only wear a ballistic vest if their direct supervisor, or designee, has approved it. Each instance must be approved prior to staff wearing the ballistic vest.
- E. Staff may only wear ballistic vests that are in good condition, not expired, and are properly sized to fit the staff.
- F. Risk Assessment and Request for Use
 - 1. When a staff determines a ballistic vest may be needed, they must discuss and **assess** the following factors with their supervisor:
 - a) Whether the activity is required based on policy or the staff's position description;
 - b) Whether there is a reasonable concern for staff safety based on credible reports from youth, families, or community partners of potential gun related threats;
 - c) Whether the staff or supervisor have any biases impacting the decision to wear a ballistic vest; and
 - d) The impact wearing a ballistic vest will have on the youth, family, or community, and how to mitigate the impact.
 - 2. If there are any concerns about bias or community impact, staff may discuss the situation with the DEI strategic manager or the OIR director.

3. The supervisor may mandate staff to wear a ballistic vest during activities determined to have a high risk for gun violence.
4. If the supervisor denies a request to wear a ballistic vest, the supervisor may also deny staff from participating in the activity, or may discuss an alternate plan with staff to complete the activity.

G. Communication when wearing a ballistic vests during home visits

1. Whenever possible, taking safety into consideration and after consulting with the supervisor, staff must notify the family in advance when planning to wear a ballistic vest during a home visit.
2. When staff wear a ballistic vest during a home visit, staff must offer the youth and family an opportunity to discuss the situation after the visit.

H. Appeal process

1. The staff and supervisor may contact the chief of parole/probation operations for further review if staff is denied a request to wear a ballistic vest, or the activity at issue is denied.
2. The chief of parole/probation operations' decision is final.

I. Requests to wear ballistic vests must be made in writing (email) to the staff's supervisor.

A verbal request may be made during exigent circumstances, followed by a written request.

J. The supervisor must respond to the request in writing and provide the reason(s) for their decision.

The supervisor may give a verbal decision during exigent circumstances, followed by a written decision.

K. Documentation

1. Each discussion about wearing a ballistic vest must be documented with the following information:
 - a) Name of youth;
 - b) Name of staff requesting to wear a ballistic vest;
 - c) Job duty which requires staff to wear a ballistic vest;
 - d) Reasons for approval or denial; and
 - e) If approved, any safety concerns or adverse impacts on the community or youth during the activity.

2. The chief of parole/probation operations must review the documentation annually for inequities and unintended consequences.

V. LOCAL OPERATING PROTOCOL REQUIRED: YES

Each field office that has ballistic vests available must have a local operating protocol to supplement this policy that addresses the following topics about ballistic vests:

- A. Storage location in the office;
- B. Check in/out log;
- C. Any noted defects or required maintenance;
- D. Routine check for expiration dates; and
- E. Maintenance and retention of the documentation list.