

<p style="text-align: center;">STATE OF VERMONT AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Staff Safety</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Page 1 of 14</p>						
<p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER: SECURITY AND SUPERVISION</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">#127</p>	<p>Supersedes: #127, dated 12/18/2024</p>							
<p>Local Procedure(s) Required: Yes – For probation and parole offices only Applicability: All staff (including contractors and volunteers) Security Level: “A” – Only Department of Corrections staff may have access to this document.</p>									
<p>Approved:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; border: none;"><u>SIGNED</u></td> <td style="width: 33%; border: none;"><u>01/15/2025</u></td> <td style="width: 33%; border: none;"><u>02/03/2025</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Nicholas J. Deml, Commissioner</td> <td style="border: none;">Date Signed</td> <td style="border: none;">Date Effective</td> </tr> </table>				<u>SIGNED</u>	<u>01/15/2025</u>	<u>02/03/2025</u>	Nicholas J. Deml, Commissioner	Date Signed	Date Effective
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose3

Authority3

Definitions3

Body armor 3

Field supervision activities 3

Policy.....3

Overview of DOC Staff Safety Practices4

Worksite Safety5

A. DOC Measures 5

B. Area Safety and Security Action Plan 5

Body Armor6

A. Field Body Armor 7

B. Facility Body Armor..... 8

Policy #127, Staff Safety

Threats on Staff9
A. Response to Threats on Staff 9
B. Staff Safety and Self-Protection Plans 11
C. Response to Staff Assaults and Other Traumatic Incidents 12



Policy #127, Staff Safety

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the Vermont Department of Corrections' (DOC's) general principles, philosophy, and policy regarding staff safety and establishes guidelines for the use of body armor and safety and self-protection plans.

AUTHORITY

3 V.S.A. § 3052; 28 V.S.A. Chapters 1,3,5,9 and 11; 21 V.S.A. § 201; VSEA Labor Contract.

DEFINITIONS

Body armor: A concealable vest worn to assist in protection of the wearer against serious injury or death due to the offensive use of firearms and to provide additional trauma protection during vehicle crashes.

Field supervision activities: Work assignments and/or tasks that place, or could reasonably be expected to place, field staff in situations where they would be required to enforce conditions of supervision in a field environment outside of a secure office setting.

POLICY

The DOC's policy is to promote safety and security across all worksites, and when staff are in the community. This is intended to provide a safe environment for staff, contracted staff, volunteers, individuals under the custody or supervision of the DOC, and others. The DOC maximizes staff safety through the use of training, safety procedures, body armor, and individual safety and self-protection plans. The DOC takes all threats on the life of staff seriously and evaluates them to determine the necessary safety precautions. This policy is intended to provide a system that protects staff members from experiencing toxic levels of stress that

Policy #127, Staff Safety

can come from working in a dangerous environment or being threatened due to their professional duties.

OVERVIEW OF DOC STAFF SAFETY PRACTICES

1. The DOC supports a safe environment within probation and parole (P&P) offices by:
 - a. Controlling access;
 - b. Ensuring staff locations are known at all times while on duty;
 - c. Maintaining the safety of staff work areas and public areas;
 - d. Establishing fire prevention, safety, and evacuation protocols; and
 - e. Implementing training.
2. The DOC provides dispatch services to field staff performing out-of-office contacts with supervised individuals in the field. These services enhance safety by tracking the location of field staff performing contacts with supervised individuals outside of their assigned office location.
3. The DOC makes safety equipment available to staff whose duties require it. This equipment is based on staff members' job duties and responsibilities.
4. The DOC maintains secure correctional facilities that ensure a safe environment for staff, contracted staff, volunteers, incarcerated individuals, and others, in accordance with the policies on facility security and emergency preparedness and response.
5. The DOC, with other Agency of Human Services (AHS) departments and offices, provide for the safety of all persons who visit or work in the DOC's Central Office. In support of Central Office safety and security, the DOC adheres to AHS safety policies and State of Vermont security measures.
6. The DOC provides psychological supports to staff through wellness programs, peer support, the employee assistance program, a Wellness Clinician, and mental health insurance coverage.
7. The DOC uses staff safety and self-protection plans in response to threats against DOC staff.

Policy #127, Staff Safety

WORKSITE SAFETY

A. DOC Measures

1. All DOC staff shall maintain awareness of all items in their personal work area.
2. Worksite keys or access cards should never be accessible to anyone other than the staff member to whom they are assigned.
 - a. Staff shall immediately report lost, stolen, or broken keys or access cards to their supervisor for replacement.
 - b. Staff shall turn in all keys and access cards to their supervisor when they transfer to another site, are terminated, resign, or are relieved of duty pending an investigation.
3. All work sites shall be locked at the end of the business day to prevent theft of property.
4. Staff shall adhere to the following:
 - a. Wherever possible, staff shall ensure that office furniture is arranged in such a way to permit easy access to an exit. There should be no barriers that might interfere with a staff member's attempt to escape a hostile situation, fire, or other situation.
 - b. Staff shall secure all filing cabinets at the end of the day to protect sensitive documents.
 - c. Staff shall be fully informed of the location of fire exits.
 - d. Staff shall have ready access to emergency telephone numbers.
 - e. Staff shall close, and if possible, lock, work site windows at the end of the normal business day.
 - f. Staff shall close and lock all exterior doors, except for the main entrance, all times.

B. Area Safety and Security Action Plan

1. Staff shall familiarize themselves with the BGS Office of State Security Programs [Area Safety and Security Action Plan](#), and refer to it for response procedures to the following types of emergency situations and incidents:
 - a. Biological Spill;
 - b. Bomb Threat;
 - c. Chemical Biological Radiological and/or Nuclear;
 - d. Civil Disturbance;

Policy #127, Staff Safety

- e. Earthquake;
 - f. Elevator Malfunction;
 - g. Evacuation Procedures;
 - h. Evacuation Procedures – After the Impact;
 - i. Fire Emergency;
 - j. Flood or Water Emergency;
 - k. Hazardous Material Spill;
 - l. Mail Handling;
 - m. Medical Emergency;
 - n. Panic Alarms/Buttons;
 - o. Power Failure;
 - p. Suspicious Fumes;
 - q. Suspicious Person, Hostile Intruder, Hostage/Weapon;
 - r. Tornado;
 - s. Weather Emergency;
 - t. Workplace Violence;
 - u. Computer, Internet & Information Security;
 - v. Parking Regulations in State Owned Parking Lots;
 - w. State Employee Identification Card;
 - x. Transportation, Personal & Public;
 - y. Vehicle Trouble;
 - z. Use of Video-Monitoring Equipment;
 - aa. Emergency Response Employees Responsibilities;
 - bb. Emergency Building Contact Information;
 - cc. Incident Response Team (IBT) Responsibilities;
 - dd. Safety and Security Coordinators Responsibilities;
 - ee. Safety Warden Responsibilities; and
 - ff. Safety Warden Checklist.
2. Facility staff shall respond to emergency situations and incidents in accordance with the policy on emergency preparedness and response.

BODY ARMOR

DOC uses body armor as part of its approach to maximizing staff safety. While body armor provides a significant level of protection, it is not a substitute for the observance of staff safety procedures.

Policy #127, Staff Safety

A. Field Body Armor

1. A field staff member may request body armor by submitting the appropriate body armor request and receipt form to the District Manager (DM), or designee.
2. Upon approval of the DM, the DM, or designee, shall submit a copy of the form to the Staff Safety Manager.
3. The Staff Safety Manager shall arrange for the field staff member to be fit for and issued body armor.
4. The field staff member shall sign an acknowledgement of receipt for body armor.
5. Field staff who request and are issued body armor shall wear the issued body armor when performing field supervision activities, unless a physician has determined that they have a medical condition that precludes wearing body armor.
6. Field staff shall wear the body armor in a concealable manner underneath clothes.
7. The DM, or designee, shall maintain a list of all the body armor issued to staff members, including:
 - a. Field staff name;
 - b. Name of body armor manufacturer;
 - c. Serial number on body armor;
 - d. Date of body armor manufacture;
 - e. Date body armor was issued; and
 - f. Date of body armor expiration, in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
8. The Staff Safety Manager shall ensure all body armor issued complies with protective and related requirements prescribed under the current standards of the National Institute of Justice.
9. Field staff members who are issued body armor shall:
 - a. Routinely inspect the body armor for fit, signs of damage, and for general cleanliness;
 - b. Clean the body armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Staff shall not dry clean or machine wash the body armor panels;
 - c. Properly store, maintain, and care for the body armor in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. This includes not exposing the body armor to direct sunlight over a long period of time;

Policy #127, Staff Safety

- d. Report any change in fit, damage, or excessive wear to the body armor panels or vest carrier to their DM, or designee and request a replacement; and
 - e. Notify their DM, or designee, and request replacement body armor, at least 60 days prior to when their issued body armor expires (i.e., five years old).
10. The DM, or designee, shall ensure that field staff members are wearing and maintaining their body armor through routine observation and periodic inspections.
 11. Body armor that is worn, damaged, nearing the end of its 5-year service life, or expired shall be replaced.
 - a. The DM, or designee, shall notify the Staff Safety Manager when there is a need to replace body armor.
 - b. The Staff Safety Manager shall arrange for the replacement and issuance of the body armor.

B. Facility Body Armor

1. The Staff Safety Manager shall issue each facility [REDACTED] body armor vests with external carriers, and arrange for their replacement whenever notified of a need.
2. The Security and Operations Supervisor (SOS), or designee, shall maintain a list of all the body armor issued to the facility, including:
 - a. Name of body armor manufacturer;
 - b. Serial number on body armor;
 - c. Date of body armor manufacture;
 - d. Date body armor was issued to the facility; and
 - e. Date of body armor expiration, in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
3. The SOS shall ensure that the body armor is secured in a cool, dry location.
4. Facility staff shall wear body armor when:
 - a. Conducting armed transports; and
 - b. The staff member is required to carry a firearm, including:
 - i. Hospital coverage for a federal detainer or high-risk individual;
 - ii. Court appearances for a federal detainer or high-risk individual;or

Policy #127, Staff Safety

- iii. When requested by a Superintendent, or someone higher in the DOC line of authority.
5. Facility staff shall not wear body armor under clothing.
6. Whenever a staff member is required to wear body armor, they shall:
 - a. Inspect the body armor for fit, signs of damage, and for general cleanliness; and
 - b. Immediately report any damage or excessive wear to the SOS, or someone higher in the DOC line of authority.
7. Whenever body armor needs to be replaced, the SOS, or someone higher in the DOC line of authority, shall notify the Staff Safety Manager.
8. The SOS shall inventory the facility's body armor monthly, and request replacement body armor from the Staff Safety Manager, at least 60 days prior to each vest's expiration (i.e., when it is five years old).

THREATS ON STAFF

A. Response to Threats on Staff

1. Any staff member who receives a threat or believes they are in danger shall:
 - a. Not engage or respond to the person making the threat;
 - b. Immediately report the situation directly to their DM, Facility Superintendent, or appropriate Director, or their designee;
 - c. Create an incident in OMS, in accordance with the policy on incident reporting, describing:
 - i. Who made the threat;
 - ii. The substantive details of the threat (i.e., what the threat was); and
 - iii. Where, when, and how the threat was received.
2. Upon such notification, the DM, Superintendent, Director, or designee, shall:
 - a. Implement immediate safety precautions [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED];
 - b. Collect information concerning the threat from staff;
 - c. Provide a verbal report or evaluation to the:

Policy #127, Staff Safety

2. The DM, Superintendent, Director, or designee shall:
 - a. Sign the safety plan and forward it, and all supporting documentation to the Staff Safety Manger or CIU for review; and
 - b. Notify Peer Support that a safety plan was created for the staff member.
3. Upon review, the Staff Safety Manger or CIU shall forward it to the:
 - a. Facilities Director, Director of Field Services, other appropriate Director, or their designee; and
 - b. Commissioner, or designee.
4. The Commissioner, or designee, shall approve or modify the plan.
5. The DM, Superintendent, Director, or designee shall forward the approved plan to:
 - a. The affected staff member; and
 - b. The Staff Safety Manager.
6. **Self-Protection Plans**
 - a. As part of the safety planning process, the staff member may request the DOC issue them a firearm. If a firearm is issued, the individual's plan is converted into a self-protection plan, in accordance with the policy on firearms. A self-protection plan builds on the safety plan to include information about the firearm issuance.
 - b. The decision whether a firearm is issued is determined on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the policy on firearms.

C. Response to Staff Assaults and Other Traumatic Incidents

1. In the event of an assault on a staff member, staff shall ensure that all the affected staff member's medical needs are attended to, including the provision of outside medical care when necessary.
2. The Superintendent, Manager, or their designee:
 - a. Shall authorize the immediate granting of one day of paid leave for the affected employee, after the staff member is treated for any possible physical injuries, in the event of a staff assault; or
 - b. May authorize the immediate granting of one day of paid leave for the affected employee, in the event of any other traumatic incident involving a staff member in the line of duty.
3. If a licensed physician or the Wellness Clinician recommends that the affected staff member not return to work until three or more workdays pass, the staff member shall be able to access the benefits provided

Policy #127, Staff Safety

through the State of Vermont's workers' compensation self-insurance program.

- a. If an assault was perpetrated by an individual under the custody or supervision of the DOC while the staff member was performing their assigned duties, the DOC will supplement the workers' compensation benefit so the staff member will be paid at one hundred percent of salary and benefits.
 - b. The Chief of Operations, or designee, shall ensure the Labor Relations Division of the Department of Human Resources (DHR) is notified of the affected employee and the length of the paid leave as soon as practicable.
 - c. The affected staff member shall not return to work without authorization from a licensed physician or the Wellness Clinician.
4. In cases of a serious assault on a staff member, the Superintendent, or designee, shall make an effort to either transfer the individual who perpetrated the assault to another facility or create a plan to reduce the likelihood of further contact between the staff member and the individual who perpetrated the assault.
 5. In instances of an assault upon a staff member, the individual who perpetrated the assault shall also be subject to criminal charges.

Policy #127, Staff Safety

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