

# Birmingham police officers first to wear armored vests

By HELEN NIEMIEC  
STAFF WRITER

Birmingham police officers will be among the first in the state to wear body armor as a standard part of their uniforms later this summer.

Police Sgt. Steven Schettenhelm is heading the effort, working with police union officers in deciding on the best body armor to buy. The armor will cost approximately \$500 per officer, though the Michigan Municipal League — the city's risk management consultant — will offset the cost at \$150 per officer. The rest will be paid for through the police budget as part of its uniform expense allocation. The vests for the 26 officers will cost approximately \$8,000.

About half of Birmingham's police officers currently wear body armor, though it is mostly the younger officers who have made it part of their uniform.

Schettenhelm said that officers trained in the last decade at various police academies have adopted

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**Richard Patterson**  
Deputy chief

ed the body armor as part of getting dressed.

"It's more rigid than a regular T-shirt. For me, I don't feel comfortable without having one on," Schettenhelm said.

The body armor weighs between two and four pounds, depending on the model ordered. The technology has improved since the metal-plated vests first appeared and now are thinner, making officers look less bulky when wearing them.

Deputy chief Richard Patterson said making the body armor a part of the standard uniform is a wise move.

"It protects the officers," Patterson said. "We don't want to

see anyone get hurt if someone pulls out a knife or a gun."

Police Chief Edward Ostin said in the past, officers weren't required to wear the vests but if they chose to, they could use their annual uniform allotment to pay for the body armor.

"Some never wore it because they thought it would be too uncomfortable or too hot," Ostin said. "We just want to make sure no one gets shot."

Another addition to the police uniform after July will be riot shields. Ostin said the department was prompted to make the request because it had been called in to assist Sterling Heights police in securing the Detroit Newspaper Agency printing plant from striking workers.

"We didn't have the shields so Sterling Heights kept us in the back of things," Ostin said.

Having the shields, Ostin said, would reduce the risk of injury to an officer any time the department is called in to assist in crowd control.



**Life vest: Body armor soon will become standard dress for Birmingham police officers. Showing a vest is officer Doug Manigold.**

STEPHEN CANTRELL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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# A.D.D. & Comprehension Related To Vision Problems

Eight-year-old Amanda was struggling in school. "My daughter tried very hard in school and found little success. When second grade began, something..." shares her mother, "...didn't click."

Her story is typical.

New hope has been found, however.

Vision is responsible for 80% of learning. And the vision system for many children, especially those with A.D.D., is deficient in giving these children the ability to learn.

Testing has shown that in many A.D.D. cases, the child's focus is not clear and is often double, causing learning to suffer.

Local optometrist, Dr. John P. Jacobi, has been working extensively with children with learning difficulties, and with tremendous success.

"We can make significant changes for these children," states Dr. Jacobi. "Many times extensive motor and perceptual testing is given, but not a single test is given for eyesight and vision. In most cases, vision has a great deal to do with the child's problems."

"These are little boys who are acting out in frustration, 3rd graders who have run into a brick wall academically, even college students who can't study without getting terrible headaches."

What is the end result? We asked the parents of Dr. Jacobi's patients.

"Her memory has greatly improved! Homework time has been cut in half. She gets most of her work done in school now," one parent describes. "I think the vision therapy program was wonderful."

"Increased concentration, at home and school, increased self-esteem," David's mother shares. His school teacher reports improved overall behavior, improved concentration, less distractibility. "His school work is improved - correct, neat, and assignments are completed on time."

"She is anxious to go back to school. She knows there is now hope to improve instead of being so defeated all the time," adds the mother of 18-year-old Sara. "My biggest regret is that we were not aware of this program while she was still in school."

Working with other specialists in the field of Attention Deficit and learning disabilities, Dr. Jacobi is helping to get the word out to have children's vision tested. A free vision screening for vision-related learning problems is offered in his Livonia office at (313) 625-8170.

The following is a list of symptoms parents should be alert to:

- Avoids reading and near work, cannot sit still or finish a task. This is often caused by double vision and eyestrain to focus, aim, or visually concentrate.
- Loses his place while reading, skips words, moves whole head back and forth, uses his fingers to follow, sometimes "impulsive." Poor control of eye movements will bring these results.
- Tilting the head while working up close, covering an eye, developing headaches after reading and paperwork are all signs of problems with eye teaming. "Children typically do not report poor vision, they assume everybody sees the way they do," notes Dr. Jacobi.
- Poor handwriting can also be the result of poor eye-hand coordination.
- Poor spelling, the child may even pass the test but cannot recall the words one week later. Reversing letters (sometimes identified as "dyslexia"). This is often the result of poor visual memory.
- It may be the explanation for the struggles many children go through. It's worth a simple phone call to find out.

