**Policy Background Brief – Armored Vehicle Policy TB III-P.04**

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While police departments across the country own and deploy armored vehicles for a variety of purposes, a brief review of the policies around those vehicles turns up few policies generally and little substantive policy directives as to their use. What policies do exist specifically for armored vehicles are largely directed at who within a Police Department is authorized to call for their deployment, and who is permitted to operate them in the field – usually a member of the Department’s command staff for the first part and a member of the tactical team for the second.

Because many departments do not count on any armored vehicles, and even the largest departments rarely have more than a few, such vehicles are often requested and loaned through mutual aid agreements between departments for special purposes, so some departments have developed more elaborate policy guidance as to the criteria by which a department may make such a loan. Likewise, these policies may specify the ways in which the vehicles may be used outside of critical incidents (for both issues see the MSU Armored Vehicle policy, attached here, which is very specific)

Some departments also have stand-alone guidance as to vehicle use that exists at what one could call the “sub-policy” level such as the Madison Wisconsin 1-page armored vehicle “standard operating procedure” which might still allow the department to hold officers accountable for misuse but provides a minimal level of guidance. (attached Madison av SOP)

The Lexipol policy for armored vehicles (the Santa Ana, CA version attached) provides the basic guidance with respect to both authorization and use as well as the basic structure of authorized deployment that appears to be standard where such policies exist.

**Structure of police policy – equipment vs. deployment/use**

While I found no stand-alone armored vehicle policies that dictate such vehicle’s use aside from a general list of the types of incidents for which such a deployment would be appropriate, this is a function of the structure of police policy generally, not specific to armored vehicles. Policies about equipment (procurement, maintenance, security, etc.) are usually separate from policies about operations (equipment use). In this, armored vehicle policies can be thought of in the same way as policies around patrol weapons or other vehicles. These too have equipment policies but rely on other key departmental policies around operations (Use of Force, vehicle pursuits) to establish the rules surrounding use of that equipment rather than putting that within the equipment policy itself. Likewise, much of the policy around armored vehicle use across departments is not contained in the armored vehicle policy but are rather addressed more fully in the policies related to the teams who are authorized to use the vehicle such as the Tactical Team policy referenced in the standard Lexipol version.

**The Oakland Proposed TBIII-P.04**

Many of the elements of the proposed OPD armored vehicle policy are in line with the Lexipol and sample policies from other jurisdictions except for two elements which are called out much more forcefully in the Oakland policy, and which I have been unable to find in any other similar policy.

1. The Oakland policy contains explicit section on the use of digital video recording devices while operating the vehicle with extensive reference to the Department’s PDRD policy and forceful reminders of when recordings must be activated and deactivated; and
2. The extensive requirement for documentation of the vehicle’s use after a call out. Most armored vehicle policies I found – even those which require documentation of the authorization to use an armored vehicle – do not contain extensive reporting requirements specific to the armored vehicle itself after an incident (as opposed to standard after-action reports of various kinds about the incident generally).

In addition to the specific and very clearly new inclusions of the video and reporting requirements listed above, the policy also explicitly references the suite of other policies such as the Designated Arrest Team (DAT) policy already examined by the Armed Unresponsive Persons Ad-Hoc Committee in a way that links it directly to the training around those types of incidents. While that may be like the way Lexipol (and many individual departments) reference tactical team policy within their armored vehicle policy, I have not found any other policies that are so explicit in the specific types of incidents and tactical responses that are permissible or in which the vehicle policy is so clearly tied into a cluster of related use and tactics policies.