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Fairfield, Ohio – Red ballistic vests that the Fairfield Fire Department recently purchased from Point Blank Body Armor are officially now part of everyday equipment on all of the department's vehicles, according to Deputy Fire Chief Tom Wagner.

The vests are to protect firefighters and paramedics when they are called to assist in potentially violent situations, emulating the trend of many fire departments across the nation.

"We have 44 vests distributed by various sizes to each of our three fire stations," Wagner said. "Each morning, every crew member on duty is required to select the appropriate size vest and place it on their assigned vehicle, so they have access throughout their entire shift."

The vests are red and have panels on the front and back marked "Fire" to easily distinguish fire department personnel from law enforcement personnel. Vest usage is mandatory when crew members are dispatched for situations involving weapons, assaults, domestic violence and establishments that serve alcohol.

Over the past two weeks, all crew members received a briefing by Deputy Fire Chief Randy McCreadie on the use, care and maintenance of the vests as well as training on how to properly wear them. Additional vests were also assigned to chief-level administrative personnel.

The vests are rated as Level IIIA and contain three flexible plates that are capable of stopping small arms fire.

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Fairfield covers 22 square miles in Southwest Ohio just north of Cincinnati, with 43,000 residents and more than 1,400 corporate, retail, service and light industrial establishments. For more information, visit www.fairfieldoh.gov, and like or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Linked In and Instagram.