

CITY OF XENIA, OHIO

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 29, 2020

Xenia Police officers trying out new load-bearing vests

Xenia, Ohio (January 29, 2020) - On a daily basis, officers with the Xenia Police Division carry their firearm, extra magazines, a taser, flashlight, two pair of handcuffs, pepper spray, a tourniquet, radio, medical equipment, and multi tool. The equipment adds between 10 and 15 extra pounds of weight, all of it straining officers' hips and lower back.

Each officer currently carries all of their equipment on a belt worn around their waist. The ballistic vest is usually worn under their uniform shirt, although a few officers use an external carrier that allows them to wear their ballistic vest over their uniform shirt. Recently, officers have been given permission by Chief Randy Person to purchase a new type of vest carrier with their uniform allowance that holds the equipment and redistributes the weight off the hips and lower back. The vest is also worn over the uniform.

A majority of Xenia officers work 12-hour shifts hours each day. The current equipment belt puts a significant amount of stress on their lower backs and hips during the long shifts. The newly designed load-bearing vests do not take away the extra weight; instead, it prevents the weight from sitting solely on the hips and lower back. An added benefit of the vest is that if an officer is not on a call, it can be taken off and easily put back on.

“Each year we review equipment that officers are authorized to purchase using their uniform allowance,” said Xenia Police Chief Randy Person. “While the load-bearing vests give us a more militaristic look than we would prefer, the benefit to both the health and safety of our officers make this a timely option.”

Carrying equipment in such a manner is beneficial for officers, according to a six-month study done at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. The study found that officers who wore load-bearing vests during the period of six months reported significantly less hip and lower-back pain.

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