

Police Federation
Of England and Wales



Ffederasiwn Heddlu
Lloegr a Chymru

Established by Act of Parliament

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FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE

IR/sg

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JBB CIRCULAR NO : 005/2012

**To: All Branch Boards
Reserve Seat Secretaries and Chairmen**

Dear Colleagues

BODY ARMOUR AND UNDERWIRE BRAS

Over recent months, concerns have been raised regarding the wearing of underwire bras underneath body armour. The concerns are around the very slim chance of the underwire becoming loose, and as a result of direct pressure, could result in the wire stabbing the wearer.

I would therefore draw your attention to the attached article by Julia Lawrence, which she wrote for POLICE magazine in 2009 and ask you to highlight this to your colleagues.

If there are any concerns which you would like to highlight, please contact Julia Lawrence at our offices at Leatherhead.

Yours sincerely

IAN RENNIE
General Secretary

Represent · Influence · Negotiate

News

Non-wired bras perform supporting role

Non-wired bras could provide support of a different kind when female officers wear them under body armour – preventing further damage when officers are being shot at, according to the Police Federation.

Julia Roper-Smith, sergeants' national policewomen's representative, spoke at the Federation women's reserve seat meeting to say that although there is no such thing as a "bullet proof bra" a good comfortable fitted non-wired bra from a retailer like Marks and Spencer would help prevent ballistic damage.

She added: "Body armour has to be close-fitting and you should wear a bra that does not contain metal objects. You should not wear under-wired bras as the metal can be driven into the skin causing more damage."
Concern was such in forces that they were seeking clarification from the Home Office Scientific Development Branch (HOSDB) and as a result the Association of Chief Police Officers' body armour subgroup wrote to all forces.

The guidance read: "HOSDB have always advised officers that body armour should be close fitting to the body and hard objects such as metal buttons, press studs, badges and the like should never be placed beneath body armour. If this advice is followed, there should be no need for female officers to wear specially padded protection at the bust area as the trauma protection provided by body armour certified to HOSDB standards is sufficient to prevent serious injury - although the wearing of padded bras will not adversely affect the safety of the wearer providing they contain no metallic/plastic wiring.

"The problem only arises if an officer is shot; there should be little or no problems with (additional) injury caused as a result of a knife attack as the risk of trauma injury is much greater with ballistic attack than knife attack."

Appropriate support: can safeguard officers Female officers: now represent 24% of service (2009)

Footnote 2012: Home Office Scientific Development Branch (HOSDB) has been renamed Centre of Applied Science and Technology (CAST)