

# BE SAFER ON THE ROAD

NIJ has partnered with police departments and other first responder agencies to increase officer safety on the nation's streets and highways. Below are recommendations based on the research.

## Warning Light Visibility

- Use higher intensity lights during the day – the higher intensity increases visibility in daylight but has no effect at night.
- Use blue lights – it is the easiest light color for the driving public to see, day or night.
- Use different colors to distinguish between vehicles parked in the normal traffic path and vehicles near the path but not obstructing it.

## Emergency Vehicle Visibility

- Place retroreflective material lower on emergency vehicles to take advantage of headlights from approaching vehicles.
- Use retroreflective material to outline an emergency vehicle with "contour" or "edge" markings.
- Use fluorescent retroreflective material when responders want a higher degree of day- and nighttime visibility.



Learn more about roadside safety studies at [NIJ.gov](http://NIJ.gov).

Keyword: Roadside safety

Read "Keeping Officers Safe on the Road" in the *NIJ Journal*:  
<http://www.nij.gov/journals/265/officers.htm>

## [www.ResponderSafety.com](http://www.ResponderSafety.com)

Developed by USFA and the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association's Emergency Responder Safety Institute with support from NIJ, the site contains the latest news and training on roadside safety as well as recent cases of responders who were injured or killed by vehicles while on duty.

## Upcoming Research

Keep an eye out for NIJ research on the direct and indirect factors leading to vehicle crashes and associated officer injuries and deaths. Extensive research is ongoing, and a final report is expected in the fall of 2013.

For a complete list of all officer safety projects, please visit:  
<http://www.nij.gov/nij/topics/law-enforcement/officer-safety/projects.htm>

## A Message From the Director, Hon. John H. Laub, Ph.D.

At the National Institute of Justice, we believe science can help save lives, ensure justice and save money.

This pamphlet contains a sampling of how NIJ-funded research can be used to increase officer safety and wellness. Visit our website, [NIJ.gov](http://NIJ.gov), to learn more about our entire body of work on officer safety and wellness.

On behalf of NIJ, I thank our country's law enforcement officers for their invaluable service and sacrifice. I look forward to our continued collaboration with the law enforcement community to identify evidence-based solutions to the field's most pressing problems.



John H. Laub



The National Institute of Justice — the research, development and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice — is dedicated to improving knowledge and understanding of crime and justice issues through science. NIJ provides objective and independent knowledge and tools to reduce crime and promote justice, particularly at the state and local levels.



# PROTECTING OUR PROTECTORS

USING SCIENCE TO IMPROVE  
OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS



# NIJ

## BE SAFER ON THE STREETS

The evidence is clear—officers are less likely to suffer a fatal injury when they are wearing body armor.

More than 3,000 police officers' lives have been saved by body armor since NIJ began developing standards and testing protocols in the mid-1970s. NIJ's standards for performance and methods for testing body armor ensure consistency and safety.

The U.S. Department of Justice strongly recommends that officers who purchase new body armor verify that the model appears on NIJ's list of models in compliance with its most current requirements.

See if your vest is on the list of compliant models:  
<http://www.justnet.org/cpl.html>



Learn more about body armor research and standards at [NIJ.gov](http://www.justnet.org/cpl.html).

Keyword: Body Armor

## BE SAFER IN USE-OF-FORCE INCIDENTS

Police officer use of conducted energy devices (CEDs) such as TASERs has not been without controversy, with questions arising about CED safety. To help answer these questions, an expert panel examined incident data from police reports, autopsies, toxicological analyses and related data from in-custody deaths. They found that the current body of literature suggests CED use is as safe as or safer than most alternatives. There is no conclusive medical evidence of a high risk of serious injury or death from direct or indirect CED exposure in healthy, normal, nonstressed, nonintoxicated persons. Further, the panel said law enforcement need not refrain from using CEDs to place uncooperative or combative subjects in custody. The panel did advise that devices should be used in accordance with departmental use-of-force policies derived from national guidelines. The panel also recommended caution in using multiple or prolonged activations of a CED.



Learn more about less-lethal technologies at [NIJ.gov](http://www.justnet.org/cpl.html).

Keyword: Less-Lethal

## INCREASE YOUR QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

In *The Shift Length Experiment*, researchers at the Police Foundation found that 10-hour shifts offered numerous benefits over the traditionally used 8-hour shifts and compressed 12-hour shifts. Officers working 10-hour shifts:

- Worked less overtime (and thus saved their department money).
- Reported a significantly higher quality of work life.
- Made fewer errors.
- Exhibited no decrease in performance.
- Got more sleep.

This study was released on the heels of *Sleep Disorders, Health and Safety in Police Officers*, another NIJ-funded study that found sleep disorders are about twice as prevalent among police officers than among the general public.



Learn more about officer safety at [NIJ.gov](http://www.justnet.org/cpl.html).

Keyword: Officer Safety

