Montgomery County, Va., Pilots Smart Bullet-Proof Vests that Contact 911 When an Officer is Injured

Skip Descant | July 28, 2017

Bullet-proof vests worn by law enforcement officers are adding another layer of safety — this time, it's in the form of electronic communications.

Officers with the Montgomery County, Va., Sheriff's Department have installed a thin plastic flexible vest-size sensor on the outside of officers' body-armor vests. If the sensor is pierced — with a bullet, knife or shrapnel — it will send an instant signal to command officials with data related to where the injury occurred, the officer's location based on GPS coordinates, and the officer's name and personal medical information like blood type or allergies.

Sensors within this Automatic Injury Detection (AID) System are connected wirelessly to the officers' Android smartphone or Kenwood NX-5300 police radio via Bluetooth, and are designed to fit across the entire surface of the protective vests. The system was developed by Select Engineering Services and DataSoft Corp.

"When you are under attack, you reach for your weapon — not your radio or cellphone," said Ken Brinkley, senior vice president at Select Engineering Services, based in Punta Gorda, Fla. "[It's] the only way you will get help if you are incapacitated.

"The game changer is AID notifies the entire agency at the same time — in seconds," said Brinkley, who believes anyone in uniform could benefit from the technology.

Capt. Brian D. Wright, who serves in the support services division with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department, said that deputies "have expressed that the units provide a level of comfort by allowing them to know their information and location will be automatically relayed to the 911 center should they be shot or stabbed."

The Sheriff's Department, which has 133 officers and is located in the western half of Virginia, implemented the AID system in March, and is participating in the field-testing stage.

"We have been providing feedback to the manufacturer as they are continually working to perfect the product and technology," Wright told *Government Technology* via email, adding the department is awaiting upgrades to the sensor panels before moving forward with complete implementation. Cost for the system is anticipated to range from about $175 to $375 per officer, he said.

Montgomery County recently placed 4th for its population category in the recent Digital Counties Survey, conducted by the Center for Digital Government* and the National Association of Counties (NACo), and noted that the smartphone component that includes allergy and blood type information helps emergency response to know how to better handle the deputy upon their arrival at the scene.

Select Engineering is working with other police departments around the country to move forward with injury detection systems, Brinkley said, adding that four departments in Texas have plans to implement AID in about two months.

The Center for Digital Government is part of e.Republic, Government Technology *'s parent company.*

http://www.govtech.com/public-safety/Montgomery-County-Va-Pilots-Smart-Bullet-Proof-Vests-that-Contact-911-When-an-Officer-is-Injured.html