

Body Armor

1009.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide law enforcement officers with guidelines for the proper use of body armor.

1009.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Irvine Police Department to maximize officer safety through the use of body armor in combination with prescribed safety procedures. While body armor provides a significant level of protection, it is not a substitute for the observance of officer safety procedures.

1009.3 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR

The Property personnel shall ensure that body armor is issued to all field personnel when the employee begins service at the Irvine Police Department and that, when issued, the body armor meets or exceeds the standards of the National Institute of Justice.

Property personnel shall establish a body armor replacement schedule and ensure that replacement body armor is issued pursuant to the schedule or whenever the body armor becomes worn or damaged to the point that its effectiveness or functionality has been compromised.

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1009.3.2 INSPECTIONS OF BODY ARMOR

Supervisors should ensure that body armor is worn and maintained in accordance with this policy through routine observation and periodic documented inspections.

1009.3.3 CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

Soft body armor should never be stored for any period of time in an area where environmental conditions (e.g., temperature, light, humidity) are not reasonably controlled (e.g., normal ambient room temperature/humidity conditions), such as in automobiles or automobile trunks.

Soft body armor should be cared for and cleaned pursuant to the manufacturer's care instructions provided with the soft body armor. The instructions can be found on labels located on the external surface of each ballistic panel. The carrier should also have a label that contains care instructions. Failure to follow these instructions may damage the ballistic performance capabilities of the armor. If care instructions for the soft body armor cannot be located, contact the manufacturer to request care instructions.

Soft body armor should not be exposed to any cleaning agents or methods not specifically recommended by the manufacturer, as noted on the armor panel label.

Soft body armor should be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended replacement schedule.

1009.4 TACTICAL BALLISTIC VEST

Officers may deploy Department issued tactical ballistic vests with armored plates under the following circumstances:

- (a) Officers are involved in a tactical situation where a suspect is believed to be armed with a weapon that is capable of defeating concealable ballistic armor (high velocity handgun or rifle).
- (b) Officers are involved in a tactical situation involving the use of a firearm or known threat of a firearm (active shooter or barricaded armed suspect).
- (c) Officers are involved in a pre-planned tactical event, such as a search warrant or parole/probation search, involving subjects with violent criminal history or firearms related violations.
- (d) When authorized or directed by a supervisor.

This equipment is intended to supplement the use of soft body armor as mandated in this policy. Absent a rapidly unfolding exigent situation it should not be worn without soft body armor.

Officers may deploy personally owned tactical ballistic vests as long as the armor rating is comparable to department issued ballistic vest and is in the same color/design as department issued ballistic vests.

1009.5 OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Office of Professional Development should:

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- (a) Monitor technological advances in the body armor industry for any appropriate changes to Department approved body armor.
- (b) Assess weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.
- (c) Provide training that educates officers about the safety benefits of wearing body armor.