

GENERAL ORDER XLII

SUBJECT: BODY ARMOR

EFFECTIVE DATE: 03-01-12

REVIEW DATE: 01-13-12

NOTE: This rule or regulation is for internal use only and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

PURPOSE

It is the policy of this law enforcement agency 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 and a high level of awareness.

PROCEDURES

A. Issuance of Body Armor

1. All body armor must comply with protective and related requirements prescribed under current standards of the National Institute of Justice.
2. All officers shall be issued agency approved body armor.
3. Body armor that is worn or damaged shall be replaced by the agency. Body armor will not be taken out of service without prior written approval from a supervisor.

B. Use of Body Armor

1. Officers shall wear only agency approved body armor.
2. Officers that are assigned to regular uniform patrol duties or officers engaged in field activities (surveillance, stakeouts, warrants service, SWAT events, etc.) are required to wear body armor unless exempted for the following:
 - a. When an agency approved physician determines that an officer has medical condition that would preclude wearing body armor.
 - b. When the officer is involved in undercover or plain clothes work that

his/her supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor.

- c. When the Chief of Police or his designee determine that circumstances or positions within the department make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor. When leaving the office, however, to perform similar tasks as those in section B-2 above, body armor will be worn.

C. Inspection of Body Armor

1. Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring that body armor is worn and maintained as required by this policy through routine observation and bi-annual inspections.
2. Annual inspections of body armor shall be conducted for fit, cleanliness, signs of damage, abuse and wear by the assistant chief or his designate.

D. Care, Maintenance and Replacement of Body Armor

1. Officers shall routinely inspect personal body armor for signs of damage and for cleanliness.
2. As dirt and perspiration may erode ballistic panels, each officer shall be responsible for cleaning personal body armor in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
3. Officers are responsible for the proper storage, maintenance and care of body armor in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
4. Officers are responsible for reporting damage or excessive wear to the ballistic panels or covers to their supervisors.
5. Body armor will be replaced in accordance with guidelines and protocols established by the national institute of justice or as budgeting allows.

A. Training

1. The assistant chief shall be responsible for monitoring technological advances in the body armor industry that may necessitate a change in body armor.
2. Assessing weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.
3. Provided training programs that demonstrate body armor's stopping power under actual firing conditions and that emphasize its safe and proper use.

4. Maintaining statistics on incidents where armor has or hasn't protected officers from harm, including traffic accidents.

A. This policy is issued by the authority of the Chief of Police. Any policy additions, deviations or revisions shall be made only at the direction of the Chief of Police.

By Authority of:

Charles Brotherton, Jr., Chief of Police