

Body Armor

1012.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Department members with guidelines for the proper use of body armor.

1012.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Santa Ana Police Department to maximize member 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 safety procedures.

1012.3 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR

The Central Distribution Center (CDC) supervisor shall ensure body armor is issued to all field-based personnel when the member begins service at the Santa Ana Police Department and, when issued, the body armor meets or exceeds the standards of the National Institute of Justice.

The CDC supervisor shall establish a body armor replacement schedule and ensure 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.

1012.3.1 USE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

Generally, the use of body armor is required subject to the following:

- (a) Officers shall only wear agency-approved body armor.
- (b) Officers shall wear body armor anytime they are working in a patrol function or in a situation where they could reasonably be expected to take enforcement action.
- (c) Officers may be excused from wearing body armor when they are functioning primarily in an administrative or support capacity and when it is not reasonably expected they will take enforcement action.
- (d) Body armor shall be worn when an officer is taking part in Department range training.
- (e) An officer may be excused from wearing body armor when he/she is involved in an undercover or plainclothes capacity that his/her supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor, or when a supervisor determines other circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor.
- (f) Professional staff personnel shall wear body armor when assigned to field duties.

1012.3.2 INSPECTIONS OF BODY ARMOR

Supervisors should ensure body armor is worn and maintained in accordance with this policy through routine observation and periodic documented inspections. Annual inspections of body armor should be conducted by an authorized designee for fit, cleanliness, and signs of damage, abuse and wear.

Santa Ana Police Department

Santa Ana PD Policy Manual

Body Armor

1012.3.3 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.

1012.4 RANGEMASTER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Training Division should:

- (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 to officers about the safety benefits of wearing body armor.