

Body Armor

1012.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

1012.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Oakley 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.

1012.3 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR

The Support Services supervisor shall ensure that body armor is issued to all officers when the officer begins service at the Oakley Police Department and that, when issued, the body armor meets or exceeds the standards of the National Institute of Justice.

The Support Services supervisor 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.

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 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 could not reasonably be expected to take enforcement action.
- (d) Body armor shall be worn when an officer is working in uniform or taking part in Department range training.
- (e) An officer may be excused from wearing body armor when he/she is involved in undercover or plainclothes work that his/her supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor, or when a supervisor determines that other circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor.
- (f) An officer may be excused from wearing body armor when he/she has received authorization from an agency-approved physician that the officer has a medical condition which precludes them from wearing body armor.

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1012.3.2 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. Annual inspections of body armor should be conducted by an authorized designee for fit, cleanliness, and signs of damage, abuse and wear.

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.

1012.3.4 USE OF HARD BODY ARMOR

Generally, the use of hard body armor (plate carrier) is intended to provide officers with an increased level of protection from firearm threats as well as provide additional ammunition and trauma treatment capabilities. Not all critical situations will warrant the deployment of plate carriers. Its use is subject to the following:

- (a) Officers shall only wear an agency-approved plate carrier.
 1. Black-colored plate carrier with front and rear rifle grade ballistic plates.
 2. Black-colored spare rifle and handgun magazine pouch.
 3. Black-colored miscellaneous equipment pouch.
 4. Small trauma kit.
 5. Front and rear of the vest are marked with POLICE in large white block lettering.
- (b) Plate carriers will be placed in the trunk/rear storage area of the officer's patrol vehicle.
- (c) Plate carriers should be properly fitted and adjusted to assist in rapidly donning the equipment and to ensure proper coverage.
- (d) Concealable/soft body armor should be worn underneath plate carrier.
- (e) Some examples of situations where deploying a plate would be reasonable include:
 1. Suspect(s) armed with a rifle(s).

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2. Active shooters.
 3. Building entries involving a suspect(s) armed with a firearm.
- (f) While intended to enhance the protection of officers, inappropriate deployment of plate carriers may cause the public to unnecessarily become concerned for their safety. Some examples of situations where deploying a plate carrier would not be reasonable include:
1. Routine traffic stops.
 2. Non-violent criminal investigations.

1012.4 RANGEMASTER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Rangemaster 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 that educates officers about the safety benefits of wearing body armor.