

Body Armor

1024.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

1024.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Barstow 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.

1024.3 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR

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

The Administrative Sergeant or Administrative Lieutenant 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.

All ballistic body armor shall be replaced on a five (5) year cycle, which is consistent with current manufacturer recommendations as well as the United States Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Bulletproof Vest Partnership / Body Armor Safety Initiative.

1024.3.1 USE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

Generally, the use of body armor is required under 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) Body armor shall be worn when an officer is working in uniform or taking part in Department range training.
- (d) 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.
- (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.

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1024.3.2 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. Officers of this department are required to maintain their assigned body armor and are required to have their body armor available at all times when reporting for duty or other assignments where the wearing of body armor is required.

1024.3.3 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 never be totally submerged in any liquid substance.

1024.4 RANGEMASTER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Rangemaster and/or Administrative Sergeant 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.