

# Body Armor

## 1024.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice MODIFIED

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

## 1024.2 POLICY

Best Practice MODIFIED

It is the policy of the Indio 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.

### 1024.2 (a) DEFINITIONS

1. Body armor: An item of personal protective equipment intended to protect the wearer from threats that may include (1) ballistic threats, (2) stabbing, fragmentation, or (3) blunt impact. Body armor generally consists of two armor panel or plates, a front and a back, placed in a carrier.
2. Carrier: A garment whose primary purpose is to retain the armor panel(s) or plate(s) and to provide a means of supporting and securing the armor panel(s) or plate(s) to the wearer.
3. Field activities: Duty assignments and/or tasks that place or could reasonably be expected to place officers in situations where they would be required to act in enforcement rather than administrative or support roles.

## 1024.3 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR

Best Practice MODIFIED

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

The Field Services Division 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.

The Field Services Division supervisors shall ensure the following;

1. Every officer shall be issued agency-approved body armor that complies with the appropriate protective and related requirements.
2. The agency shall specify requirements for the carrier that is part of the agency-approved body armor.
3. Every officer shall be individually measured and fitted for body armor via an approved vendor.

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4. Body armor that is damaged shall be replaced in accordance with established guidelines and protocols.

5. Body armor that has reached the end of its warranty period (5 year life span) should be replaced in accordance with established guidelines and protocols.

#### 1024.3.1 USE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED**

The use of body armor is mandatory at the Indio Police Department when in full police uniform. All sworn personnel up to & including the Chief of police are subject to the following:

- (a) Officers shall only wear agency-approved body armor.
- (b) Body armor shall be worn when an officer is working in uniform and contact with the public is possible or when taking part in department range training. This includes community events and meetings while in full police uniform..
- (c) 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.
- (d) The only exception to this rule is when it is medically necessary as indicated by a physicians note.

#### 1024.3.2 INSPECTIONS OF BODY ARMOR

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED**

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.

#### 1024.3.3 CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED**

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.

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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, which is currently 5 years for NIJ approved products.

#### **1024.3.3(a) EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY**

1. Each officer shall be responsible for reporting damage or excessive wear to the ballistic panels or carrier to his or her supervisor and the individual responsible for the uniform supply function.

#### **1024.3.3(b) SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

1. Supervisors shall ensure that all officers comply with this policy, including ensuring that body armor is worn and maintained as required by this policy through routine observation and periodic documented inspections.

#### **1024.4 RANGEMASTER RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Best Practice** **MODIFIED**

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.
- (d) Maintaining statistics on incidents where armor has or has not protected officers from harm, including motor vehicle crashes.
- (e) Providing training programs that demonstrate body armor's stopping power under actual firing conditions and that emphasize its safe and proper use.