

- I. Policy
- II. Procedures
- III. Responsibility

- I. Policy

The wearing of soft body armor has been proven to increase an officer's chances of surviving a traumatic injury to body areas protected by the soft body armor. Therefore, it is the policy of this Division that all officers working in a Patrol capacity will be required to wear their soft body armor panels when on duty.

- II. Procedures

- A. All officers will follow the instructions on the proper care and maintenance of their issued soft body armor, which are included on each panel of the soft body armor.
- B. All officers working in a Patrol capacity will be required to wear their soft body armor panels when on duty

- C. Authorized Equipment and Manner of Wear

- 1. The black nylon, exterior, vest carrier is approved for wear by on-duty officers as an outer garment in place of, or in addition to, the division approved sweater and jacket for all uniform classes except Class A.
- 2. The black vest carrier does not replace the issued uniform shirt. The appropriate uniform class shirt must be worn with the carrier.
- 3. The black vest carrier may be worn by officers in plainclothes for special assignments/details with the approval of the appropriate Section Commander.
- 4. Outer garment carriers and privately purchased armor must be approved by the Assistant Chief, Support Operations. Approval will be granted only when the armor's and carrier's color, style, type and visual appearance are consistent with the Division vendor's armor and carrier.
- 5. Officers who wear soft body armor will utilize only those carriers provided by the manufacturer and have the option of wearing the soft body armor either underneath the shirt or in the outer carrier.

- D. Care and Maintenance

- 1. On a regular basis, officers will conduct a visual inspection of their soft body armor. Should the officer note a slight color change in the armor (i.e., a brownish hue), fabric fraying or abrasion, weave raveling, fiber flex fatigue, extensive staining or a "washed out" or faded appearance, written notification will be made to his/her immediate supervisor.

2. Ultraviolet light breaks down the ballistic resistance of *any body armor*. Therefore, when storing and using body armor, the armor will be protected from sunlight and other sources of ultraviolet light. Soft body armor will not be left exposed in the passenger compartment of a vehicle, inside a building near a window, or otherwise exposed to sunlight, plant grow-lights, or fluorescent lights.
3. Soft body armor should not be folded.
4. Cleaning of the soft body armor panels will be done in accordance with the instructions printed on the panels.

E. Replacement/Alteration of Soft Body Armor

1. The Division assumes no responsibility for replacement or alteration of privately purchased soft body armor or carriers.
2. Regardless of the date of occurrence, replacement or alteration of issued soft body armor due to weight gain or loss, normal wear, abuse (including the failure to adhere to the "Care and Maintenance" provisions of this directive), accidental damage or negligence will be at the officer's expense. Replacement armor will be of the same make, color, style, threat level and visual appearance, and must be approved before purchase by the Assistant Chief, Support Operations.
3. After new soft body armor is issued by the Division, any officer experiencing discomfort related to the armor will immediately notify the Management and Technology Branch Commander in writing.
4. The Division will replace issued soft body armor damaged as a result of duty-related gunfire or as a result of an officer's direct performance of duty. However, if the damage is due to the officer's acting in a negligent manner, the Division will not replace the equipment. The officer will be responsible for purchasing replacement armor at personal expense.
5. When the Division is responsible for soft body armor replacement and there is no armor for the affected officer to wear before new armor is received, the officer may be placed in an administrative assignment until new armor is issued.

F. Soft Body Armor Standards

1. All officers will be issued soft body armor of the Threat Level Type that provides wrap-around or full coverage. The Division will not issue or authorize for duty use handgun ammunition that exceeds the capability of the issued soft body armor.
2. All soft body armor issued or approved by the Division will meet or exceed current National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Standards.

3. Every three years, one officer's issued soft body armor will be selected for testing by an independent company. Information derived from this testing will be maintained by the property specialist. The Division will procure replacement armor for the affected officer prior to the testing.

III. Responsibility

Supervisors will conduct semi-annual inspections of the soft body armor issued/worn by officers under their supervision. These inspections will take place in the months of January and July of each calendar year. The results of these inspections will be reported to the Section/Unit Commanders means of a Field Inspection Form. The Section/Unit Commanders will review these reports and forward them to the Division's Property Specialist for filing.

**Approved Park Police Document  
Signed Original on File**

**End of Directive**