

Body Armor

1010.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

1010.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the California Department of State Hospitals (DSH) 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.

1010.3 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR

The Hospital Police Chief shall ensure that body armor is issued to all officers when the officer begins service at OPS and that, when issued, the body armor meets or exceeds the standards of the National Institute of Justice, and complies with the current Collective Bargaining Unit 7 agreement.

The Hospital Police Chief 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.

1010.3.1 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 OPS 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.

1010.3.2 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.

1010.3.3 CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

Soft body armor should never be stored for an extended 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.