

TRAINING BULLETIN #81  
BODY ARMOR VESTS  
3/93

The Department has recently completed the distribution of body armor vests to Department members. The distribution plan called for each assigned position in the field to be allocated a vest. Vests were also distributed to Administrative Staff positions.

This safety equipment is provided to give members responding to potentially dangerous situations the maximum protection currently available.

Ballistic Protection and Composition

The ballistic panels of the body armor vests are comprised of multi-layers of Kevlar or Spectra Shield which provide a Threat Level or Protection Level of IIA. Body armor vests have been found to be very effective in protecting the wearer from blunt force trauma, sharp objects, low and medium energy handgun bullets, shotgun pellets, and "slashing" type knife attacks. They are not designed to protect against rifle fire.

Wearing and Concealment of Body Armor Vests

A body armor vest may be worn anytime a member feels it is necessary to do so. However, body armor shall be worn prior to responding to any of the following incidents:

- Assaults With a Deadly Weapon (ADW)
- Domestic Violence/Family Disputes
- Shootings
- Stabbings/Cuttings
- Sniper Incidents/Police Standbys
- Other Violent Crimes or Conditions
- Tactical Alerts
- Incidents in known "trouble areas"

A body armor vest should not be worn in a fashion that allows it to be seen by a potential attacker. It should be covered by a brush jacket, EMS safety coat, or the firefighting turnout coat.

Protection from an attack depends on concealment of the vest so the attacker cannot purposefully aim at or attack the unprotected part of the body.

It is recognized that there may be a slight delay in response time while members don their vests. However, it is vitally important, as a safety issue, that body armor be in place prior to entering a potentially hostile environment.

### Cleaning and Maintenance

The body armor vests presently in use by our Department have been purchased from two different manufacturers and have different cleaning requirements.

#### "Second Chance"

The ballistic panels cannot be removed from this vest. The vest should be cleaned with a cloth dampened with a solution of soap and water and allowed to air dry in a shaded area. The vest should not be submersed in the solution as the ballistic protection will be destroyed. DO NOT USE BLEACH.

#### "Safariland"

Prior to washing, the ballistic panels must be removed from the nylon shell. This is accomplished by unfastening the velcro strips at the bottom of each panel. Failure to remove the ballistic panels prior to washing will destroy their ballistic protection. The nylon shell of the vest manufactured by Safariland may be hand washed in COLD water and soap, and air dried in the shade. DO NOT IRON. DO NOT USE BLEACH. Disregard the manufacturer's label which reads "Dry Cleaning Only."

A temporary vest may be obtained on loan from the Battalion Office while assigned vest is being washed and dried.

For sanitary reasons, only members who are assigned a vest may wear it under their jumpsuit or standard uniform. Shared vests must be worn over a jumpsuit, standard uniform, or work uniform.

### Repairs

If a body armor vest should need any repairs to the outer shell, they may be made by the mobile turnout repairman. Damaged ballistic panels shall be sent to the Supply and Maintenance Division for replacement or repair.

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### Identification

The proper procedure for identification of body armor vests shall be followed in accordance with the Manual of Operation, Volume 2, Section 3/7-55.01.

### Security

With the tremendous increase in shooting and stabbing incidents over the past several years, thefts of body armor may increase accordingly. All members shall store body armor vests in a secured area, out of sight of the public, when they are not being worn. When carried on Department apparatus, body armor shall be stored in a compartment or in a locked Rescue Ambulance.