Body Armor

1012.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE
The purpose of this policy is to provide law enforcement officers with guidelines for the proper use of body armor.

1012.2 POLICY
It is the policy of the Palos Verdes Estates 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.

1012.3 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR
The Administration supervisor shall ensure that body armor is issued to all officers when the officer begins service at the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department and that, when issued, the body armor meets or exceeds the standards of the National Institute of Justice.

The Administration 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.

1012.3.1 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 and could 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.

1012.3.2 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
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armor should be conducted by an authorized designee for fit, cleanliness, and signs of damage, abuse and wear.

1012.3.3 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 be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommended replacement schedule.

1012.4 RANGEMASTER RESPONSIBILITIES
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.

1012.5 EXTERNAL VEST CARRIERS (EVC)
The EVC is authorized as an option to be worn while on patrol with the Class “B” and “C” uniforms. If an officer chooses to wear an EVC, the officer’s gun belt shall be a nylon style (not leather). The EVC will not be authorized for use with the Class “A” uniform.

The department will not provide officers assigned to patrol with an EVC. If an officer chooses to wear an EVC while assigned to patrol, they will be responsible for all associated costs.

1012.6 WEAR
If an officer chooses to wear an EVC while assigned to patrol, the vest shall only be removed under the following circumstances:

1. While inside of the police station/detective bureau.
   (a) For this policy section, the “police station” does not include the garage or adjacent unsecured areas. EVC shall be worn (fully fastened) at all times, even
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if the officer plans to only be momentarily in the garage, front lobby, city hall and any other areas that are not within the walls of the police station.

2. When an officer can articulate why they needed to remove the vest (i.e., need to jump in water to save someone, medical aid needed for the officer wearing the vest, etc.)

3. As authorized by the watch commander with reasonable articulation.

1012.7 SPECIFICATIONS
Department personnel who wear an EVC will utilize the following specifications:

The Safariland Models DN6566 and DN6565 (black in color) are the only vest carriers authorized.

The use of the external body armor is subject to the following:

Front Insignia

1. Issued cloth badge
2. White on black Velcro POLICE non-reflective patch
3. White on black Velcro nametape: first initial-period, last name in all caps
   1. Embroidered with 3/4" letters
4. Black Mollee Attachments

Back Insignia:

1. White on black Velcro POLICE non-reflective patch
   1. 6x2" on front
   2. 8x4" on back

1012.8 ATTACHMENTS
The following attachments are authorized to carry on the EVC. The pouches/holsters must be a nylon style Molle attachment or as approved by division captain.

1. ASP baton / holder
2. Compact flashlight holder
3. OC holder
4. Glove pouch/tourniquet pouch
5. Radio / holder
6. Spare magazine holders:
   (a) Unless deploying on a tactical incident, patrol officers are only authorized to carry a total of 3 spare magazines on their person. The magazines may be carried on the belt and/or the EVC. Officers must carry two handgun magazines; the third magazine is optional and maybe for a handgun or rifle.
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7. Utility pouch
8. Taser
9. Handcuffs / Holder
10. Audio Recorder / Body Camera

EVC shall not have the following items attached to it:

1. Patches other than department authorized
2. Firearms

The EVC shall not be used as a vest carrier alone. The purpose of the EVC is to transfer weight from the officer’s belt to the vest. Some equipment must be transferred from the belt on the EVC.

The number of pouches on the external body armor should be reasonable as to not restrict the mobility of the wearer and/or present a hazard or danger. The pouches shall be kept clean, operable and present a professional uniform appearance.