

Soft Body Armor

905.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Fresno County Fire Protection District is committed to reducing or eliminating occupational risks and hazards whenever possible in an effort to improve member safety. The purpose of this policy is to identify soft body armor as a practical safety measure that should be used to reduce some of the occupational risks and hazards confronting members.

905.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Fresno County Fire Protection District to provide soft body armor to District members who may be exposed to any of the occupational risks and hazards the armor is designed to protect against. The Fresno County Fire Protection District authorizes members to utilize District-issued soft body armor whenever members believe it may be prudent or appropriate to do so. It is not the intent of the District to have members utilize soft body armor on a routine basis, but rather to have soft body armor available to personnel for situations that may be violent, potentially violent or otherwise a risk to safety that the use of body armor could reduce or eliminate.

A supervisor may mandate the use of soft body armor in any situation or circumstance that he/she feels may warrant the use of armor.

905.3 PROCEDURE

For the purposes of this policy a supervisor may be defined as follows:

- The Incident Commander directing any incident
- Any supervisor in the Incident Command System chain of command directing or supervising the activities of personnel assigned to him/her
- The company officer in charge of any apparatus or crew
- The senior member of any crew or functional unit when no clear lines of rank or authority exist (e.g., the senior member of a two-person rescue unit crew)

In certain situations, supervisors and members of the District should strongly consider utilizing soft body armor. These situations include:

- Incidents involving mass civil disturbances, rioting or looting
- Incidents involving large-scale protesting or organized civil disturbances
- Incidents involving confrontations between rival street gangs, motorcycle gangs or other criminal enterprises
- Incidents involving gunshots fired when reports or personal observations indicate that shooting is ongoing
- Incidents involving groups or organizations with a known history of violent encounters or activities

Soft Body Armor

- Any incident when law enforcement representatives recommend the use of body armor

905.4 CONCEALMENT OF BODY ARMOR

Whenever members of the District utilize soft body armor, the armor should be covered by an over garment that effectively conceals the armor from public view or recognition. In the event of an unanticipated violent encounter during an incident, members may don soft body armor without regard to concealment.

905.5 STORAGE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

All District-issued body armor should be stored in full compliance with the manufacturer's guidance. Generally, all body armor should be stored such that it is not subject to direct sunlight or extreme temperatures and is protected from moisture or high humidity. Body armor should be stored in a location that is reasonably accessible to members as needed. During times of known or anticipated violent events, body armor may be temporarily moved to and stored in any location that makes it more readily and quickly accessible to members.

905.6 MAINTENANCE AND SERVICE LIFE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

All District-issued body armor shall be inspected and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All District body armor will be immediately removed from service at any time that it is obviously damaged, any time it fails the manufacturer's inspection criteria, when it has exceeded its rated service life, or for any other reason deemed appropriate by the District.