

	<b>FREDERICKSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES</b>	
	<b>OPERATIONS</b>	
<b>312.00</b>	<b>APPROVED:</b> <i>Brian F. Layton, Chief of Police</i>	<b>Initiated:</b> 10/01/2007
		<b>Revised:</b> 02/16/2024

## EQUIPMENT

**312.00 – Non-Departmental Equipment and Apparel** – All equipment and apparel that is not issued by the Department must have prior approval by the officer's supervisor or Division Commander before being used or worn. The Chief of Police has the final authority regarding the use or wearing of non-departmental equipment and apparel.

Employees may submit suggestions and comments to the Uniform and Equipment Committee regarding equipment and apparel they would like to use. The Uniform and Equipment Committee will be responsible to oversee research for the suggested equipment or apparel and make a recommendation to the Chief of Police for approval/denial. If the equipment or apparel is approved by the Chief of Police for use, the item(s) and specifications will be added into the department directives in the appropriate section. [41.3.4]

**312.01 – Body Armor** - The Department makes every attempt to provide equipment designed to enhance officer safety. In the course of their professional duties, police officers are exposed to a risk of assault by firearms, particularly handguns (including their own). One of the most effective safeguards available against such threats is the use of body armor. While body armor provides a significant level of protection, it is not an absolute protection against all threat levels, and is not a substitute for following sound officer safety tactics and practices. It is the policy of the Department to enhance the physical safety of officers through the use of body armor in conjunction with established safety procedures.

Officers shall wear only agency approved body armor. The wearing of body armor includes the entire vest and it shall be worn in conformance to the guidelines issued by the manufacturer. It shall be the duty of all immediate supervisors to ensure that all officers required to wear body armor do so.

**312.02 – Definitions** - The following definitions are for the limited purposes of this directive and may not apply in all other cases:

- Concealable Body Armor: bullet resistant material designed for daily wear under the uniform shirt or outer clothing, and which has been issued or approved for use by the Department.
- Tactical Body Armor: body armor offering a higher level of threat protection and which is issued to members of specialized units for use in high risk or tactical operations

**312.03 - Issuance of Body Armor** - Every sworn officer of the Department is issued concealable body armor that complies with standards established by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). All issued body armor shall conform to the level of threat protection required to defeat the issued handgun ammunition fired from the duty weapon.

Concealable body armor and carriers that are worn or damaged through normal wear or use shall be replaced or repaired by the agency. It is the responsibility of the officer to report any damage or wear of the ballistic panels or carrier to the appropriate supervisor. Do not make alterations or repairs.

The Department follows a “rational replacement policy” in the replacement of body armor. Generally, body armor is replaced approximately every five (5) years and/or when necessitated by wear, use or damage. Any time body armor is legitimately damaged in the line of duty it will be replaced by the Department, as soon as practical.

Any unit of body armor that has been fired upon, punctured, stabbed, cut, or otherwise structurally damaged from a threat shall be immediately removed from service and replaced.

Requests to wear personally owned body armor after the effective date of this directive must be submitted to the Chief of Police through the chain of command for approval. Approval will only be considered if the requested body armor meets or exceeds the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) specifications of the currently issued department body armor.

**312.04 - Wearing of Body Armor** - Unless exempted by policy or waiver from the Chief of Police, body armor wear is mandatory for:

- All sworn officers in the Patrol Division, all officers wearing a uniform while working in supportive functions such as the Detective Division, and all officers engaged in pre-planned, high-risk situations.
- All sworn personnel when they are wearing the uniform and assigned to temporary support duties, i.e., special events and ICS incidents.
- Officers engaged in secondary employment assignments where law enforcement activity is anticipated or when wearing a uniform; and other activities that are not specifically listed in the “exceptions area” below.
- Officers while attending court in uniform.
- All officers, regardless of assignment or rank, when participating in live fire training

exercises. The exact guidelines for this will be set by the Range Officer.

- All officers engaged in pre-planned high-risk situations such as:
  1. Arrest or search warrant execution.
  2. At Incident Command System locations.
  3. Civil disturbances.
  4. When it is known ballistic shields will be utilized.
  5. Any situation deemed appropriate by any on-scene supervisor. [41.3.5]

**312.05 – Exemptions for Wearing Body Armor** - Except as specified above, the routine wearing of concealable body armor while on duty is not required under the following conditions:

- When the officer is working in an authorized covert capacity that may be compromised by the wearing of body armor; or
- When the officer is working an authorized assignment (or training) where the wearing of body armor is not appropriate or necessary as determined by the respective Watch Commander; or
- When the officer is assigned to perform an administrative function with little likelihood of responding to incidents which present a threat; or
- As otherwise deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police.

Officers who are exempted from the routine wearing of body armor under one of the above defined exemptions must carefully weigh the risks and ensure that their issued armor is readily accessible while on duty (normally in the officer's assigned vehicle).

Supervisors may require the wearing of body armor for any sworn officers working in an assignment where, in their opinion, the assignment carries with it a significant threat that would warrant the wearing of body armor.

**312.06 - Tactical Body Armor** - Tactical body armor is issued to members of the Special Equipment Tactical Team (SETT) in order to provide them with higher levels of threat protection during high-risk tactical operations.

The SETT Commander shall be responsible for determining the tactical body armor requirements of the Unit and for ensuring that assigned personnel are properly trained in its use and maintenance. [41.3.6]

**312.07 - Inspection of Body Armor** - As part of squad level line inspections, supervisors will examine each sworn officer's body armor during January of each year. The inspection should include an assessment of fit, cleanliness, and signs of damage, abuse, or need for repair or replacement. The supervisor conducting the inspection shall forward the results to his/her respective Division Commander by memorandum or email.

The SETT Commander shall be responsible for conducting regular periodic inspections of tactical body armor issued to SETT personnel.

**312.08 - Maintenance and Disposal of Body Armor** - Each officer is responsible for the proper care and maintenance of body armor in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. This includes regular inspection of the armor for signs of damage and general cleanliness.

Any loss or theft of departmental body armor shall immediately be reported in writing to the appropriate supervisor.

Surplus body armor shall be disposed of by recycling to a manufacturer or donation to other agencies for legitimate purposes, or destroyed. The Support Services Division Commander must approve any disposal of departmental body armor.

**312.09 - Training and Evaluation** - The Support Services Division Commander (or designee) will be responsible for maintaining information on advances in the body armor or NIJ specifications that may indicate a need to upgrade or replace body armor. Additionally, the Support Services Division Commander will designate a person to maintain records for body armor identification and issuance data enabling the Department to track the age of the units and effect the programmed scheduled replacement of used body armor once the manufacturer's warranty on the ballistic panels has expired.